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Why dirty workers stay?

Social and societal forces that increase an employee's intention to stay

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**WHY DIRTY WORKERS STAY? SOCIAL AND SOCIETAL
FORCES THAT INCREASE AN EMPLOYEE'S INTENTION
TO STAY**

by

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Dissertation

**Submitted to the Department of Management
King's College London**

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

April 1, 2014

London, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

A substantial portion of the workforce performs the jobs that other people avoid because the work is dirty, dangerous, servile or morally reprehensible. Over time, researchers have reflected on how tainted jobs are critical to the effective functioning of society (Hughes, 1951). The current study sought to understand the factors and experiences connected with a worker's intention to stay in a dirty job.

A single multinational company with 800 employees operating in the United Kingdom, France and the United States was the focus of the study. The company secures and cleans vacant properties. Most of the job sites are public housing buildings situated in high crime areas. The workers first must clear out discarded personal items and garbage scattered throughout the units by the previous occupants and squatters. The properties must be thoroughly cleaned and then steel panels are installed on the doors and windows to secure the property.

Although a significant amount of literature exists on the subject of dirty work, the studies have typically employed qualitative data collection methods. In contrast, the current study diverged from this previous approach by adopting a mixed-methods style of data collection. A quantitative survey data (N=266) tested a hypothesized model of factors relating to workers' intention to stay with the company. The researcher also performed qualitative semi-structured

interviews (N=53) and job site passive participation observation to reveal distinctive traits in worker attitudes and experiences relating to their dirty job.

The study identified 13 factors associated with this population of workers' intention to stay in their job. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, data was collected to assess workers' attitudes and experiences regarding: the characteristics of their work, attitudes toward dirty work, perceived stigma, job satisfaction and job embeddedness.

Analysis of the data revealed support for the majority of the predicted hypotheses. Intention to stay was positively associated with job variety, individual and group autonomy, satisfaction with work duties, person-job fit, distributive justice, satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervision and job embeddedness. Conversely, perceived stigma and alternative job opportunities showed a negative association with the workers' intention to stay. The qualitative results revealed worker reactions to job site conditions and experiences. The main contribution of the study lies in the identification, and analysis of, several distinct factors and related issues associated with a dirty worker's decision to stay in a dirty job. The implications and limitations of the study are also discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of my supervisors, Dr. Stephen Deery and Dr. Janet Walsh in helping me complete this dissertation. Also, I want to thank the workers at the research company for sharing their experiences and keeping me safe as I visited their dirty work world. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support. I especially appreciate my son, Alex, for his extraordinary patience throughout the process of completing my dissertation.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

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1.1 Research background

Dirty work refers to job duties and occupations that are generally deemed by society to be distasteful and degrading (Hughes, 1951). Hughes (1962) proposed that dirty workers were acting as “agents” of the larger population managing all of the soiled aspects of society (Hughes, 1962:7). Hughes (1951) also developed the concept that dirty jobs carry a stigma or taint and that the people performing these jobs are stigmatized based on their connection to the jobs (Hughes, 1951: 319).

The concept of dirty work encompasses sociological, psychological, social, and management research. Current literature classifies dirty jobs as tainted in one of three ways (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1951). Physical taint arises when an occupation is directly linked to dirt, waste matter, or death (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415) (e.g. garbage handlers (Perry, 1998), morticians (Thompson, 1991) and butchers (Meara, 1974). A job might also be considered physically tainted if it is performed under particularly noxious or dangerous conditions (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). The work situations encountered by firefighters (Tracy & Scott, 2006), miners (Fitzpatrick, 1980), social workers (Mayer & Rosenblatt, 1975), and even bike messengers (Kidder, 2006) illustrate this type of taint.

The second classification of dirty work involves socially tainted jobs. This includes occupations that involve workers coming into regular contact with people or groups that are themselves regarded as stigmatized (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415) Examples of such occupations include: prison guards (Tracy

& Scott, 2007), AIDS hospice workers (Martinez, 2007), psychiatric ward workers (Emerson & Pollner, 1975) and public defenders (McIntyre, 1987). Socially dirty work is also found in jobs that put a worker in a subservient role (e.g. hotel room attendants, (Powell & Watson, 2006) and fast-food workers (Newman, 1999).

The third classification involves morally tainted occupations. The jobs are deemed be “of dubious virtue” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415), such as exotic dancers (Grandy, 2008) and abortion doctors (Ackroyd, 2007: 47; Harris et al., 2011). Moral taint also can attach to jobs in which a worker is thought to employ methods that are “deceptive, intrusive, confrontational, or that otherwise defy norms of civility” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). Examples of these jobs include: nightclub bouncer (Pratten, 2007: 85) or a bailbondsman (Davis, 1993).

1.2 The study design and goals

The study involves 266 operations level workers at a multinational company operating in the United Kingdom, France and the United States. The company clears and cleans vacant properties and then secures them with locking steel window and door panels. Most job sites are public housing buildings, some of which are situated in potentially volatile, high crime areas where drug dealers, gangs and homeless squatters are common features.

The workers remove personal items and garbage left behind by previous tenants and squatters. In addition to discarded furniture, clothing and food, these workers

frequently find used needles and other drug paraphernalia, as well as human and animal excrement, dead animals and bug infestations. These dirty workers clean the units and secure them to prevent unauthorized entry.

Given the elements of the job, the work in the study has the potential to be classified as physically or socially dirty, or both. The job has obvious physical dirt components and the work sites are situated in dangerous, high crime areas. The work is socially dirty because the workers come into frequent contact with criminals, homeless people and drug addicts – individuals who are often considered by society to carry a social stigma. Furthermore, the workers must clean up the excrement and abandoned personal items of others, attaching a servile quality to aspects of the work.

1.3 Aims of the study

The goal of this study is to link dirty work characteristics and experiences with employee turnover considerations. This thesis discusses the societal positioning of dirty work (Hughes, 1951, 1958), the occupational stigma attached to dirty work by outsiders (Kreiner et al., 2006) and the psychological management of dirt by the workers. These themes are considered within the practical management construct of employee retention (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

This study was fortunate to have the firmly laid foundation of Hughes (1951, 1958) and Ashforth & Kreiner (1999) to explain dirty work and clarify how this study corresponds with other types of dirty work situations. This literature

explores worker stigmatization, taint management strategies and social and occupational identity (Hughes, 1951, 1958; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). All of these themes provide excellent context for the current study.

Furthermore, this study contributes as part of the collection of ethnographic studies that focus on a single organization or industry to learn more about this specific type of dirty work. Additionally, as the current study utilizes survey data collection along with interviews and site observation which are commonly used in dirty work studies - it extends knowledge in the field. The most distinctive feature of the current research is that the model suggests certain variables are associated with workers' intention to stay. The primary research question asks what factors influence a dirty worker's intention to stay. At present, this form of study is not prevalent in dirty work research.

To assist in answering the research question, the study looked at a number of job-related constructs commonly associated with employee intention to stay. The researcher proposed 11 hypotheses which fit into four main categories: 1) work characteristics and attitudes toward dirty work, 2) job satisfaction, 3) job embeddedness and 4) control variables including age, tenure, education levels and perceived job alternatives.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is presented in nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter reviews the literature on dirty work. The chapter explains the origin of the dirty work concept, as well as the updated classifications produced by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999). Dirty work literature includes a discussion of occupational stigma and identity.

Chapter 3 provides a review of prominent literature on the concept of employee turnover. Research on employee retention has examined the role of job satisfaction (pay, rewards, promotion, supervision, nature of the work, task variety, organizational commitment, group and individual autonomy). This chapter also looks at employee-job fit, the unfolding model of turnover (Lee & Mitchell, 1994) and job embeddedness (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). To date, employee retention research has not been specifically applied to a dirty work population of workers. This study aims to contribute to the absence of coverage.

The fourth chapter discusses contextual considerations associated with the research company. The chapter first outlines the research company structure and provides a description of the type of services performed. The chapter continues with a discussion of the managerial style utilized at the company. This information is useful to grasp how the company structure and its managerial approach influence worker attitudes and experiences.

Chapter 5 details the research framework for the study and the methods used to collect the research data. The chapter also discusses why a mixed methodology is the best fit for the aims of the study. The chapter discusses the quantitative and qualitative methods utilized. This includes a discussion of the scales and their reliabilities. The chapter concludes with the contents of the semi-structured interview guide.

The sixth chapter reports the quantitative results of the conceptual model. First, the descriptive statistics of the variables are provided. This is followed by an examination of the significant country location differences. The chapter next presents the correlations between the variables and intention to stay. Lastly, the results for the hierarchical regression are discussed.

Chapter 7 presents the results of the qualitative phase of the study. The data include descriptions of worker activities and the dirty work environment based on observer-participant observation at company job sites. The chapter also discusses worker comments collected during semi-structured interviews and open-ended survey comments.

The eighth chapter integrates the key quantitative and qualitative findings and presents a discussion of the study in relation to the variables of interest. Finally, Chapter 9 summarizes the contents of the thesis, and outlines the contribution, implications, and limitations of the study. The chapter also suggests thoughts for future research.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has described the research background and the goals of the current study. It has emphasized the importance of understanding how the experiences and attitudes of dirty workers influence workers' intention to stay. The repellant nature of many dirty jobs and the stigma they carry might suggest that it would be difficult to find long term employees. As this is not always the case, this study seeks to understand factors that influence the workers' decision to stay.

This research evaluates the current findings with themes founded in existing dirty work literature which incorporates work characteristics and psychological principles that can accompany performance of dirty tasks. The extant research, combined with the insights gained from this current study, provides a meaningful contribution to understanding dirty worker intention to stay. The following chapter describes the history of the dirty work concept and explores in depth the significant literature on the subject.

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2.1 Introduction

The concept of dirty jobs is not a new one. Unpleasant tasks are necessary to the proper functioning of any community. Historically, one's social status has played a pervasive role in the delegation of dirty work. For example, in ancient Rome, convicts and vagrants were used to clean the city's sewers (Scobie, 1986:408). While social position is still relevant to job opportunities, dirty jobs are now actively chosen by many. Over the last 50 years, researchers have taken notice of this willingness by some to do these repugnant and precarious jobs. Curiosity about worker motives and how they tolerate such foul conditions and public scrutiny has sparked numerous studies and articles.

This chapter will discuss the parameters of dirty work as well as explain past research and theories relating to dirty work. A large component of dirty work literature is the stigmatization that accompanies these jobs. In response to this, the concepts of taint management and occupational identity have been heavily researched. It is in this context that this chapter will address how taint management strategies are used to combat the occupational stigma often attached to dirty jobs. To conclude, this section will analyze how occupational identification, employee fit and limited job alternatives might affect a worker's decision to accept and remain in a dirty job.

2.2 Dirty work origins and research

Everett Hughes (1951) first introduced the ‘dirty work’ label to refer to job duties and occupations that are generally deemed by society to be distasteful and degrading (Hughes, 1951). Hughes expanded on this idea of “dirty work” in subsequent publications which dealt with the moral division of labour between those with higher status from those with lower societal standing (Hughes, 1962; Hughes, 1958). Hughes proposed that dirty workers were acting as “agents” of the larger population managing all of the soiled aspects of society (Hughes, 1962: 7).

Hughes also claimed that dirty work can be an intimate part of the very activity which gives its occupation its charisma, as is the case of a physician’s frequent need to handle the human body in order to heal it (Hughes, 1971: 344). “Insofar as an occupation carries with it a self-conception, a notion of personal dignity, it is likely that at some point one will feel he is having to do something that is *infra dignitate*” (Hughes, 1971: 343). In other words, every occupation will differ in terms of what is considered an undignified aspect of the work. Additionally, what is thought of as undignified in one profession may be readily accepted in another (Mannon, 1981:111).

Hughes developed the idea that certain jobs carry a stigma or taint and that the people performing these jobs are stigmatized based on their connection to the jobs (Hughes, 1951: 319; Hughes, 1971). Further, that this stigma leads to the

dirty workers being disavowed and symbolically separated from society¹
(Hughes, 1951; *See* Reid, 1991: 88).

“A stigmatized group is one whose identity or membership in some social category calls into question the full humanity of its members; in the eyes of others. The stigma embodies an emergent property or product of definitional purposes (e.g. physical mark, attribute, characteristic) that through social interaction is regarded as flawed, spoiled, deviant or otherwise inferior”

(Crocker, et al. 1998: 504; *see also* Goffman, 1963).

Marginalized groups such as the mentally ill, homeless, physically disabled or diseased have frequently been ostracized and subjected to visible disdain, isolation and rejection for employment (Anderson, Snow & Cress, 1994; Link, 1987). “Stigmatization can compromise a person’s quality of life and can lead to diminished income, employment and housing opportunities as well as strained interactions with others” (Kraus, 2010: 438 *citing* Goffman, 1963; Link, 1987; Link & Phelan, 2001; Rosenfield, 1997).

Hughes reasoned that these dirty jobs and the people who hold them can be tainted on several fronts. The most obvious and visible type of dirtiness is a job that is physically revolting (Hughes, 1951: 319). Another classification of dirty work comes in the form of those specific duties or occupations that “in some way go counter to the more heroic of our moral conceptions” (Hughes, 1951: 319).

¹ In the English justice system, for example, the division of labour between the barrister and the solicitor was established to protect the barrister so he or she can be unsullied to go before “the bar” (the symbolic barrier separating the public from those admitted to the well of Her Majesty’s court.) In contrast, an office-based solicitor was relegated to the potentially undignified (“dirtier”) tasks of dealing first-hand with criminals or the unclean public (Perry, 1998: 6).

Hughes later defined dirty work with more detail, describing tasks as being physically, socially or morally tainted (Hughes, 1958: 122).

Although there have been countless studies and articles discussing stigmatized conditions, stigma resulting from one's occupation has received much less attention. Perhaps, because jobs are viewed as taken by choice rather than imposed, this might suggest a lessened stigmatized status (Kraus, 2010: 435).

In 1952, Ray Gold wrote one of the first articles applying the dirty work principles to a specific profession (Gold, 1952). In his investigation of apartment janitors, Gold dealt with the characterization of janitors as lowly, subservient and physically dirty (Gold, 1952: 487). Although Gold never actually used the term "dirty work", he artfully described the stigma attached to cleaning up the dirt of others. He also emphasized the janitor's acute awareness that not only did the tenants consider his job to be lowly but that many held him, as a person, in low esteem because of his willingness to serve as a janitor (Gold, 1952: 488). Gold described how many tenants would address the workers simply as "janitor" rather than by their names, which symbolically kept their relationships with the janitors as impersonal as possible and limited their association with the dirt (Gold 1952: 489). Gold's analysis of janitors was to be the first of many studies looking into the thought processes attached to "dirty work".

2.2.1 Ashforth and Kreiner's model

In 1999, Ashforth and Kreiner built on Hughes' theoretical base to offer a comprehensive and widely used model for classifying the types of stigma or taint that can attach to occupations. Ashforth and Kreiner identify three distinct forms of taint: physical, social and moral (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 414). They also break down each type of taint further by offering two criteria contained within each of the three types.

2.2.1.1 Physical taint

Physical taint arises when an occupation is either directly linked with dirt, waste matter, or death (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). Examples of this might be the duties associated with garbage handlers (Perry, 1998), morticians (Thompson, 1991) and butchers (Meara, 1974). A job might also be considered physically tainted if it is performed under particularly noxious or dangerous conditions (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). The work situations encountered by firefighters (Tracy & Scott, 2006), miners (Fitzpatrick, (1980), social workers² (Mayer & Rosenblatt, (1975), and even bike messengers (Kidder, (2006) illustrate this type of taint. Dirty workers in this category may face accidental hazards or criminal violence as a component of their work responsibilities.

² In a survey conducted with 560 personal social service workers in the UK, 53% of the participants responded that they had been subjected to actual violence or threats of violence in the previous three years [Wessex study] (Brown, Bute & Ford, 1986).

The duties of paramedics touch on several different types of physical taint. In James Mannon's 1981 study of this occupation, much of his data reflected the physically disgusting and dangerous elements of the job. The paramedics described how they routinely work directly on victims who are bloody, dirty, smelly, mutilated or who have been dead for several days (Mannon, 1981: 112). Mannon further discussed how the environmental conditions at the work scene can be particularly difficult. Some sites are dirty and noisy such as traffic accident scenes or physically uncomfortable due to extreme weather (Mannon, 1981: 112). Even more distressing are the sites located in dangerous, crime-ridden areas where paramedics fear being attacked at the scene (Mannon, 1981: 112). Many of the paramedics interviewed told similar accounts of residents of low income housing projects throwing bricks and bottles at the paramedics as they entered the building (Mannon, 1981: 160).

2.2.1.2 Social taint

Social taint may be found in occupations that involve regular contact with people or groups that are themselves regarded as stigmatized (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). Prison guards (Tracy & Scott, 2006), AIDS hospice workers (Martinez, 2007), psychiatric ward workers (Emerson & Pollner, 1975) and public defenders (McIntyre, 1987) are examples of this branch of social taint. The second criteria contained within social taint surfaces when the duties of a job require a servile relationship to others such as: hotel room attendants, (Powell & Watson, 2006) and fast-food workers (Newman, 1999).

2.2.1.3 Moral taint

Occupations that are morally tainted are those regarded as somewhat sinful or “of dubious virtue” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). Jobs that might be considered morally tainted include: topless dancer (Thompson & Harred, 2005), pawnbroker (Hartnett, 1981) and prostitute (McKeganey, & Barnard, 1996). Moral taint might also attach to jobs in which a worker is thought to employ methods that are “deceptive, intrusive, confrontational, or that otherwise defy norms of civility” (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). Examples of these jobs might be a nightclub bouncer (Pratten, 2007: 85) or a bailbondsman (Davis, 1993).

Although these demarcations are helpful, dirty work occupations often contain elements of taint from several of the categories. For example, police officers encounter both physical taint in the form of potential physical danger and social taint in their continual contact with stigmatized individuals (Tracy, 2004). Another illustration is the work of the bike messenger which often encompasses all three types of taint (Kidder, 2006: 40). In the most obvious form, messenger work is physically tainted due to its physical difficulty and the tremendous danger associated with riding a bike in a bustling urban center (Kidder, 2006: 40). Social taint affixes due to the servile affiliation with the clients to whom they make deliveries. Lastly, messengers face taint on a moral level due to the stigma brought about by their devil-may-care attitude regarding the safety of themselves and others (Kidder, 2006: 40).

Exotic dancers provide yet another example of a profession that is tainted on many levels. Dancing can be viewed as physically tainted (e.g. in contact with bodily fluids through unprotected customer interactions or dancers using the same stage and props without cleaning between performances). The profession also exemplifies social taint due to its association with sordid men and working in dangerous areas of the city. Finally, the job carries with it a heavy moral taint due to its perceived promotion of sex for money, sexual exhibitionism and extra-marital sex (Grandy, 2008).

It should also be noted that just about every job contains some duty that might be considered dirty work (Mannon, 1981: 110). Further, dirty work is not limited to low status jobs. High prestige jobs such as veterinarians, psychiatrists, and medical examiners also contain some tainted components (*see* Ackroyd, 2007: 47; Emerson & Pollner, 1975; Shaw, 2004; Hamilton, 2007). While some low status jobs may be stigmatized as dirty work solely due to its holders being of dismal rank, highly skilled professions are not immune from being branded as dirty workers and can still be perceived as having somewhat undignified and possibly immoral duties (e.g. abortion doctors) (Ackroyd, 2007: 47; Harris et al., 2011).

2.2.2 Expanded model of dirty work

In 2006, Kreiner, Ashforth and Sluss expanded on and reconfigured some of the work presented by Ashforth and Kreiner's 1999 article (Kreiner, et al., 2006). They criticized the earlier model as being oversimplified and ignoring the

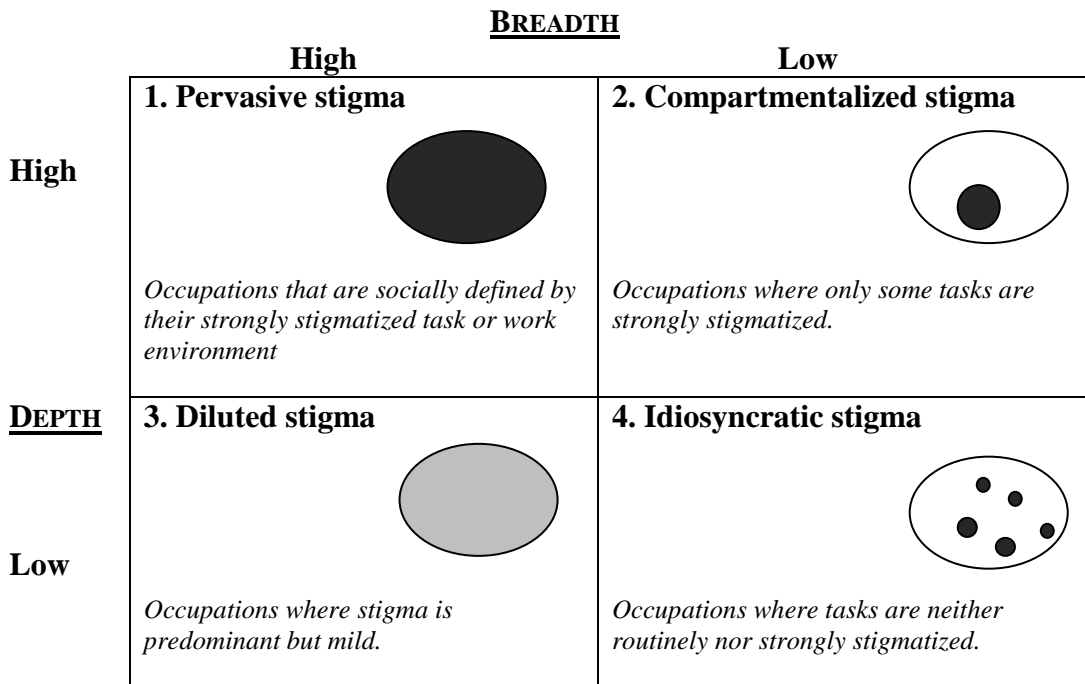
obvious and significant differences found in a broad range of occupations (Kreiner, et al., 2006: 619). While acknowledging the basic usefulness of the earlier model, Kreiner and his co-authors believed that the old scheme failed to appreciate the differences in the breadth and depth of the stigmatized jobs (Kreiner et al., 2006: 621).

The authors define breadth as “the proportion of work that is dirty or the centrality of dirt to the occupational identity – the core, distinctive and possibly enduring characteristics that typify the line of work” (Kreiner et al., 2006: 621), (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984). Within this model, breadth is viewed as a function of proportion or centrality whereas depth is viewed as a function of the intensity as well as the direct involvement with dirt (Kreiner et al., 2006: 621).

Ashforth and Kreiner’s 1999 model emphasized jobs that epitomize physical, social or moral taint such that they are high in both breadth and depth (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). The updated model presents a 2 X 2 classification design to reflect the differing degrees of taint associated with different jobs. Kreiner and his co-authors labeled the four types of stigmas as: 1) pervasive, 2) compartmentalized, 3) diluted, and 4) idiosyncratic (Kreiner, et al. 2006: 622).

Fig. 1 reflects this scheme.

Figure 1: Typology of Dirty Work



(Darker shading indicates stronger taint)

(Kreiner et al., 2006: 622)

While any level of occupational stigma can detrimentally affect an employee, the workers researched in the current study potentially fall into either of the two more severe categories of this typology. A large proportion of the tasks performed could carry a strong stigma due to being physically dirty, strenuous and potentially hazardous. The work environment is even more connected with stigma as it takes place in abandoned, dilapidated properties located in high crime areas. The workers are always within close proximity to the dirt.

All of these factors lend themselves to a “pervasive” stigma label. However, because there might be a small percentage of the work that takes place on construction sites in less dangerous geographic areas, it is possible that the

classification of “compartmentalized” stigma might be applicable to some of the workers. In either case, the overarching job descriptions would elicit some level of stigma for the workers based on the duties themselves or with the tasks in combination with a tainted work environment. A full description of the jobs and a more elaborate depiction of their work environment will be discussed in the context chapter.

2.3 Occupational stigma and dirty work

Workers tend to be keenly conscious of the stigma that is attached to their work (Crocker & Major, 1989: 610; Gold, 1952: 488; Henson, 1996: 144). First, like the rest of society, dirty workers have been exposed to the same negative stereotypes regarding their occupations. Once entering the profession, these workers must struggle with their own internal prejudices regarding their work (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999: 417). Additionally, outside influences can reinforce those negative perceptions through subtle criticisms, reduced deference and demeaning questions (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 417). These outsiders may be specific individuals or one’s entire sociocultural environment (Crocker & Major, 1989: 610 *citing* Mead, 1934).

Occupational stigma, unlike many other sources of stigma, is perceived to be controllable (Crocker & Major, 1994; Henson, 1996:145). So while people view a stigmatized trait such as mental illness or physical deformity as beyond one’s control, they can harbor much harsher opinions about a stigma that exists by choice (Crandall, 2000; Kreiner, et al., 2006: 620). Dirty workers often find it

difficult to avoid images that confirm the inadequacy of their occupational “choice” and the alleged personal deficiencies their employment implies (Henson, 1996: 145).

Experts have theorised that continual verbal and nonverbal assaults on a dirty worker’s self-concept become increasingly difficult for her to deny or deflect (Grandy, 2008; Tomura, 2009). In essence, a perceived “social fact” becomes an accepted and internalized “personal fact” which influences a worker’s self-image and self-esteem (*See* Walsh, 1975: 85). Over time, these stigmatized workers may begin to experience feelings of isolation and shame, a loss of self-confidence and a distressing erosion of self-esteem as these unflattering views are internalized. Following that logic, members of stigmatized and oppressed groups who are aware that they are regarded negatively by others would likely incorporate those negative viewpoints into their self-concept and consequently, suffer from lowered self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989: 610; Kraus, 2010: 436; *see also* Saunders, 1981).

In her 2010 article, Kraus discusses what she terms a “softer” form of stigma found in the occupational taint, attached to belly dancers. In her study, she found that the belly dancers often receive rude or judgmental comments. This treatment provoked many of the dancers to suffer decreased self-esteem and pride, as well as internal conflict about their activities (Kraus, 2010: 436). She sought to better grasp how belly dancers and others performing stigmatized professions attempt to maintain a positive self-image in the face of ridicule.

It is important to note however, that other studies contradict this idea that dirty work is automatically detrimental to a dirty worker's self-esteem (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Crocker & Major, 1989: 611). Studies have found that some individuals employed in dirty work professions not only manage to maintain a healthy self-image but even feel proud of their occupation (Perry, 1998; Stacey, 2005). In a somewhat graphic example, Ackroyd and Crowdy noted in their (1990) ethnography of English slaughtermen, that the employees found the greatest esteem through activities that emphasized dominance, strength and masculinity. The job held in highest regard was "sticking" the animal – the duty that ultimately killed the creature and spilled pools of blood. The slaughtermen left work wearing their "bloodstained overalls with some pride", refusing to abide by the British law that they shower and change out of soiled clothes (Ackroyd & Crowdy, 1990: 8).

Similarly, in a 2007 study of farm animal veterinarians research showed that the doctors possessed a comparable attitude to the slaughtermen. Despite the palpable 'filth' inherent in their daily tasks, the vets not only managed to avoid the stigma traditionally associated with their "dirty work" but also parlayed their ability to deal with the filth into increased prominence within their rural community (Hamilton, 2007: 487).

Like the slaughtermen, the vets seemed to wear their muck stains as a badge of honour and professional pride (Hamilton, 2007: 490). The researcher expressed surprise at the veterinarian's willingness "to tolerate, and perhaps even boast

about working so intimately with repugnant bodily mess excreta, placenta, broken bones, and rotten teeth” (Hamilton, 2007: 490).

In another example contrasting this view of diminished esteem regarding working a dirty job, a 2006 study of hotel room attendants indicated that the room attendants held a predominately positive view of their job (Powell & Watson, 2006: 299, 306). Although 68 percent of the attendants felt that others considered them low status, 94 percent of the respondents still saw their work as ‘providing a useful service to visitors’. Further, 62 percent of the respondents took pride in being a room attendant (Powell & Watson, 2006: 306).

2.4 Taint management

One way or another, if a dirty worker remains in a particular occupation, he or she needs to seek ways to feel good in that job. Given the potentially detrimental effects of occupational stigma, researchers have put forth several techniques to maintain a healthy occupational identity and high personal self-esteem. Ashforth & Kreiner suggest two overarching methods for dealing with taint. They are through the use of occupational ideologies and social weighting (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 150, 424).

2.4.1 Occupational Ideologies

Occupational ideologies are systems of beliefs that provide a means for interpreting and understanding what the occupation does and why it matters (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421). As a particular ideology is enacted, it becomes

shared among members, thus fostering confidence in its validity. Consensus creates conviction (Hardin & Higgins, 1996). Groups often sustain beliefs that individuals cannot and this can amplify the tendency of individuals to construct self-serving beliefs (McClure, 1991).

An ideology can be positive or negative. For example, the commonly held belief that workers perform dirty jobs because they have no better options is an example of a negative ideology. To manage taint, workers enact ideologies that hold the profession in high esteem and emphasize the positives of the job. In doing so, the techniques may justify the occupation and render it more palatable and perhaps even attractive to insiders and outsiders alike, helping to persuade dirty workers to identify with their work role. Ashforth proposes three types of ideologies: reframing, recalibrating and refocusing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Reframing involves transforming the significance attached to a stigmatized occupation. Researchers have observed two forms of reframing: infusing and neutralizing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421). The first can occur through infusing, which is the process of implanting positive value into the stigma. By doing this, the work becomes admirable and respected. The most common method of infusing is for the reframer to focus on the occupational goal. The worker looks to the relevancy of the work's mission and attaches honorable qualities to its source. By viewing themselves as having a higher calling and therefore, valuable to society, the workers can feel proud of their occupation (Ashforth, 1999: 422; *see also* Mannon, 1981: 167).

Exotic dancers and prostitutes reframe their work by viewing their duties as therapeutic and educational services rather than just the pointless selling of their bodies (Miller, 1987). Similarly, garbage workers can view themselves as having a larger societal purpose beyond just picking up other people's trash. Instead, they are helping to keep their communities clean and sanitary for its inhabitants (Perry, 1998). Pawn brokers can rationalize their work to be akin to a "financier" by helping individuals who find themselves in a financial crisis and who need money quickly, without credit background considerations (Hartnett, 1981:154).

The second form of reframing occurs when the worker neutralizes the negative value of the stigma (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). A worker might do this by refuting her accountability by claiming that she is merely doing her job. She can do this by either putting the responsibility with a third party or by adopting the position that no one is responsible for the fact that she is doing the work (Ronai, 1992).

Recalibrating adjusts the implicit standards that are used to evaluate the scale (how much) and/or valence (how good) of the components (Ashforth et al., 2007: 150). To illustrate this point, Ashforth refers to the example of dogcatchers who take job duties that would appear to an outsider to be universally dirty and spread them across a value hierarchy (Palmer, 1978). For example, calls regarding possible rabies and bites were valued more positively, whereas calls relating to stray dogs wandering about were valued as negative. In doing this, the differentiation created value (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 422).

In using a recalibration, dirty workers are more inclined to relay stories and reminisce about their positively valued experiences to others. By doing this, the workers internalize their recalibrated valuation scales and genuinely begin to feel the duties have value. This helps them derive personal fulfillment from carrying out these tasks that others consider undesirable (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 422).

The third ideology, refocusing, involves shifting the attention from the tainted aspects of the occupation to the non-tainted aspects (Ashforth et al., 2007: 150). They negate and devalue negative attributions while also create and revalue positive ideologies (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421).

Numerous studies of dirty workers illustrate this point. For example, garbage handlers have reported that they enjoy working outdoors and the day to day variety in what they encounter. Further, some of the garbage handlers interviewed actually enjoyed the concept of entering into the “underside of life” (Perry, 1998: 112-113). In the same way, erotic dancers often focus on the large amounts of money they receive as well as the abundance of attention they receive from the customers as the positive reasons for doing their job (Ronai, 1992: 110; *see also* Gold, 1952). These invalidate and diminish negative attributions while also producing and reassessing positive ideologies (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421).

2.4.2 Social weighting

Ashforth and Kreiner have presented three forms of social weighting: condemning the condemners, supporting supporters and selective social comparing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 424). Because the concept of dirtiness is a socially created and sustained idea, workers in dirty jobs face a constant threat to their identity from those “outsiders” who do not work in the field (e.g. family, neighbors, clients, and the general public). Ashforth and Kreiner assert that there are similarities in the way that dirty workers deal with the potentially damaging effects of negative perceptions.

The first coping mechanism is to differentiate the outsiders. This might be accomplished by “condemning the condemners” (Sykes & Matza, 1957). This is done by impugning the motives, character, knowledge or authority, (basically the “legitimacy”) of those who might criticize the dirty work profession (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 424). This action permits the dirty worker to consciously and subconsciously reject any negativity. Gold (1964) demonstrated this phenomenon in his piece on apartment janitors when he described the tenants who treated the janitors badly as the “ignorant, nutty or nervous” (Gold, 1964).

Ashforth and Kreiner also point out that where most workers assume respect in the absence of any outward displays of negative perception, a dirty worker often presupposes otherwise. These feelings arise as a result of heightened sensitivity to possible disrespect. In sum, they may find disrespect where none was intended because of their insecurities about their profession (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999:

424). These feelings often lead dirty workers to condemn outsiders as a pre-emptive measure even where the condemnation was in reality, baseless.

In contrast to denouncing outsiders, dirty workers may give amplified credibility to anyone who appears to be supportive of their work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 424). When the opportunity presents itself, workers in dirty professions will gravitate toward supportive outsiders, preferably of high status. They hypothesize that these connections offer the greatest possibilities of social validation (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 425).

The third type of social weighting comes in the form of downward social comparisons. Social comparison theory suggests that downward social comparisons come to light when a person feels threatened and vulnerable (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 425; *see also* Crocker & Major, 1989). Dirty workers may constantly perceive threats from the outsiders which makes downward social comparisons a likely device for workers in the dirty work professions. For example high priced call girls might feel superior to streetwalking prostitutes (Bryan, 1965). It should also be noted that the ideological devices of reframing, recalibrating, and refocusing are likely to both reinforce and be reinforced through social weighting techniques (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 426).

William Thompson has written several relevant articles on tainted professions: topless dancers (2003), morticians (1991) and beef handlers (1983) (Thompson & Harred, 1983). Thompson observed that many of his study subjects relied on

similar taint management strategies to help alleviate the stigma. These tactics included: symbolic redefinition of their work, role distance, professionalism, emphasizing service and enjoying socioeconomic success rather than occupational prestige (Thompson, 1991: 530).

Thompson noted how workers exhibit a tendency to use language to describe their profession that negates the stigmatized perceptions (Thompson, 1991: 530). This symbolic redefinition as he terms it, subtly diminishes the dirty aspects of the job. For example, a mortician avoids using words “dead” and “death” by using less harsh words such as “passing on” and “eternal slumber” (Thompson, 1991: 530). Some morticians found that the job title “funeral director” held fewer stigmas than the title of “mortician” or “embalmer” (Thompson, 1991: 531).

Several researchers have recognized that many dirty workers cope with taint by distancing themselves from the recipients of their unseemly services. This taint management strategy creates a wall between the worker and the aspects of the job that strongly contribute to a feeling of taint. Ways to accomplish this distance include: emotional detachment, humor and countering the stereotype (Thompson, 1991) (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 10). An example of detachment is when paramedics take a cold, impersonal stance when dealing with patients (Mannon, 1981: 164-5). This helps limit the level of interaction with tainted individuals, as well as protect the paramedic from painful emotions that might accompany witnessing horrible scenes of suffering and death. Similarly, strippers and prostitutes often depersonalize their work setting by pretending

they are just playing a role and maintaining strict boundaries with clients (McKeganey & Bernard, 1996: 84; Ronai, 1992:110).

Hamilton also noted that when veterinarians talked about their work they frequently found humor in the tasks that most exemplified 'dirty work'. By sharing anecdotes about the most distasteful functions of their day, the vets could draw upon dirtiness "as a form of distancing mechanism that symbolically, if not physically, separates them from their animal patients". This form of humor suggests an intimate commonality among the doctors which not only enhanced their collective professional identity but also maintained their level of detachment (Hamilton, 2007: 493).

On that same vein, in addition to the individual methods of managing dirty work stigma there are group factors like the one mentioned above in the veterinarian study which also help workers create and maintain a positive self-image regarding their work (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999). Some have theorised that in the face of the stigmatization of their job, workers develop a strong occupational or work group culture that values their contribution and rejects their detractors (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 419; *see also* Fitzpatrick, 1980: 154). In doing so, the worker is defining his social identity and identifying with the organization.

In their analysis of taint management strategies employed by firefighters and correctional workers, Tracy & Scott (2006) suggest that different sources of taint -physical, social and moral- vary in their resistance to employees' taint management strategies (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 32). Physical taint seems to be the

easiest to manage. “Members are able to reframe their jobs’ physically dangerous aspects into badges of honor, and seem adept at dealing with disgust through humor and self-deprecating talk” (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 32).

Social taint however, stems from stigmatized clients, and is therefore, more difficult to manage. “Gravediggers and crime scene investigators can literally distance themselves from their work’s physical muck with fairly steadfast assurance that it will not follow them” (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 32). However, social service employees such as correctional officers and firefighters must work with “dirt” and all of its accompanying human faculties. These stigmatized clients have the physical ability and free will to follow, talk back and refuse to comply (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 32).

Achieving distance from moral taint appears to be the most troubling to manage. Morally tainted jobs are typically embedded in a social structure that adjudicates the value and morality of the work. Unlike social taint, which can be dealt with by blaming a client, there is no clearly definable entity onto which blame can be focused when the job is morally stigmatized (Tracy & Scott, 2006: 33).

2.5 Identity

People develop part of their identity and sense of self from the organizations or work groups to which they belong (Hogg & Terry, 2001: 1). For many, their workplace or organizational identity may be more pervasive than ascribed

identities based on gender, age, ethnicity, race or nationality (Hogg & Terry, 2001: 2).

Identity management is particularly relevant in dirty work scenarios. Creating and maintaining a positive sense of self at work is a greater challenge when one's work is considered "dirty" by societal standards. When work is dull, demeaning, sordid, or dangerous there may be a divergence between the identity of the worker and society's perception of the work. When such an inconsistency exists, workers seek out strategies to guard their self-concepts from perceived and actual threats (Ghidina, 1992: 74).

Identity management involves not only the selective embracing and avoiding of particular aspects of work; it also involves the creation and maintenance of definitions of work that are optimally self-enhancing. The relationship between work and identity is riddled with nuance and complexities. One of the primary links between the two is the type of work performed.

In contrast to identity theories that focus on organizational membership, Berger suggested a typology of work in terms of its significance to individuals (Berger, 1964). First, there is work that provides primary self-identification and self-commitment for the individual. Second, there is work that is not fulfilling or self-identifying but is also not oppressive or threatening to one's self-conception. Third, there is work that is oppressive, threatening to one's dignity, and does not provide a primary source of self-identification for the individual (Berger, 1964: 218-219). Berger's third criterion describes the very essence of dirty work.

Following his logic, workers of dirty jobs should find aspects tangential or external to their work to “achieve feelings of a coherent and strong self, necessary for coping with work tasks” (Alvesson, 1998: 990).

Rather than looking to enhance one’s self-identity through sources external to the work setting, many theories look at how workers attempt to create positive self-definitions within the job environment. Research indicates that individuals need a relatively secure and stable sense of self-definition to adapt well to their social environments (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 417). This includes a positive occupational identity. One of propositions in Ashforth and Kreiner’s often cited 1999 article is that the negativity connected with dirty work helps the development of strong occupational or workgroup cultures. They further propose that strong work cultures facilitate esteem-enhancing social identities (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 419).

This argument is supported by Frable, Platt and Hoey’s 1998 research regarding how people feel better around similarly stigmatized others (Frable et al., 1998). The Frable et al. study primarily focuses on concealed stigmas such as being gay, a low family income or having an eating disorder. The stigma of working in a dirty work profession is not visible unless the worker is engaged in his daily task. The researchers argue that other people who belong to a socially stigmatized group furnish information for evaluating the self with respect to group membership, and they typically provide more positive perceptions of group membership than do non-members (Frable et al., 1998: 909; Jones et al., 1984).

Similarly stigmatized individuals also give meaning to group membership, provide information about how to negotiate social interactions successfully and supply moral support when difficulties are encountered (Frable et al., 1998: 909; Goffman, 1963). In sum, “contact with similar others, then, protects the psychological self from negative cultural messages” (Frable et al., 1998: 909). The study confirmed this hypothesis finding that the stigmatized individuals felt better about themselves and were less anxious and depressed when around similarly stigmatized individuals (Frable et al., 1998: 917).

2.5.1 Social identity theory

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), identity forms along a continuum from personal identity to social identity. One’s personal identity refers to self-designation in terms of unique and distinctive characteristics. Social identity, in contrast, develops from category memberships. Identification with an organization or group is significant because of its contribution to a person’s identity (*see* Abrams & Hogg, 1990). The greater identification a person enjoys with a group, the more he applies the attributes and characteristics of the group to himself. SIT proposes that, when social identity is pervasive, group-evaluation and self-evaluation become isomorphic (Abrams & Hogg, 2001).

Tajfel first introduced the concept of social identity in 1972 (Tajfel, 1972). One’s social identity is defined as those aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he belongs, as well as the emotional or evaluative consequences of this group membership (Tajfel, 1972: 292). Central

to social identity theory is the premise that, because people are motivated to enhance their feelings of self-worth, they seek to belong to groups that compare favorably with other groups or in other words, they aspire to belong to high-status groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to social identity theory, there are a number of strategies that members of low-status groups can use to improve or enhance their social identity (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Van Knippenberg & Ellemers, 1993).

At the foundation of social identity theory are two main sociocognitive processes. The first is categorization, in which the actor reduces the uncertainty that is inherent in social interaction. Individuals accomplish this by sorting themselves and others into groups (Kreiner et al., 2006: 624). The second process involves seeking out positive group distinctiveness to promote individual self-enhancement (Kreiner et al., 2006: 624).

Once an individual embraces his group, he will then seek to affirm the value of his group through favorable comparisons with other groups (out-groups). Following this logic, dirty workers may strengthen their collective selves through socializing and bonding with fellow dirty workers within their organization (Kreiner & Ashforth, 1999).

The Social Identity theory also argues that external threats to a group's identity will generate an incentive to protect the group's positive distinctiveness and thereby, the individual's self-esteem (Kreiner et al., 2006: 624; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). There is evidence that identity threat can lead group membership to

exhibit pride and in-group bias, especially when these groups are situationally rather than chronically devalued (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996).

One identity study of low status professions looked at how custodians defined their jobs according to how social relations were a direct source of fulfilment and self-enhancement (Ghidina, 1992). The research showed that despite its “dirty work” image, the study subjects were able to find sources of satisfaction and fulfilment in their work (Ghidina, 1992: 78).

Workers described aspects of the job that provided feelings of autonomy, ownership, special skills and seeing a finished result from their labour (Ghidina, 1992: 78). They also cited social facets on the job that were more self-enhancing than the work itself (Ghidina, 1992: 78). Unlike other studies that have reflected satisfaction as a result of belonging to an occupational community, these workers found social opportunities with the people for whom they cleaned. Relations with clients served to alleviate the status discrepancy between custodians and clients which in turn, helped the workers maintain a positive sense of self (Ghidina, 1992: 78).

The custodian’s ability to positively self-define in relation to his work or through social opportunities is crucial to his long term success within the position. Though workers in occupations of higher status may have more aspects of work which are self-enhancing to choose from than do workers in lower status occupations, all workers engage in the process of selecting the most enhancing

aspects of their work to define themselves, their work, and their occupation (Ghidina, 1992: 83).

2.6 Employee thrill-seeking

As mentioned previously, some dirty work jobs are inherently dangerous. The peril is what categorizes the job as dirty work. Within the concept of person-job fit, some research suggests that a certain individuals seek out hazardous situations willingly. This type of voluntary risk taking might prompt an individual to “fit” in dirty jobs that involve physically dangerous situations (e.g. firefighters (Tracy & Scott, 2006), bike messengers (Kidder, 2006), deep-sea fishermen (Drudi, 1998), and night-club bouncers (Pratten, 2007)).

Often the risk that accompanies potentially dangerous dirty work is not simply an irreducible by-product of the interest but rather the very source of what makes the pursuit stimulating and enjoyable (Simon, 2002:180). The concept of voluntarily choosing to enter a risky situation (or at least not actively avoiding it) has been the subject of considerable research. Those who seek out scenarios that may include elements of risk have received such titles as “stress-seekers” (Klausner, 1968) “sensation-seekers” (Zucherman et al., 1964) and “eudaemonists” (Bernard, 1968).

2.6.1 Edgework (Lyng, 1990)

Stephen Lyng (1990) coined the term “edgework” to encompass all voluntary risk taking activities (that require an individual to negotiate the boundary between life and death (Lyng, 1990). Although the term, edgework, has been applied to risky sporting and leisure activities, it has also been used to explain potentially dangerous vocational choices such as fire-fighting, test piloting, soldiering, movie stunt work and police work (Lyng, 1990: 857).

Lyng theorises that those who intentionally put themselves in potentially dangerous situations may do so to test their ability to maintain control of a situation that verges on chaos (Lyng, 1990: 871). Lyng believes that in modern society, actors use edgework activities to express their need for self-determination in an overly ordered and constraining world (Lyng, 1990). He sees situations on the boundaries of social order as most conducive to such activities (Lyng, 1990).

The prototypical edgework situation “is one in which the individual’s failure to meet the challenge at hand will result in death or, at the very least, debilitating injury” (Lyng, 1990: 857). The concept also encapsulates a wider array of activities in which individuals need to negotiate the “edge,” or boundary between two physical and mental states: “life versus death, conscious versus unconsciousness, sanity versus insanity, and ordered sense of self and environment versus a disordered self and environment (Lyng, 1990: 857).

In addition to physically risky situations, edgework may also apply to emotionally “risky” situations. An example of this might be when firefighters are exposed to gruesome or upsetting accident scenes as part of their daily work. In such cases, rescuers must “negotiate the boundary between controlled and uncontrolled emotions” to ensure that their reactions do not interfere with performing their duties (Lois, 2001).

Those taking risks may not do so to achieve a specific goal or to earn money but rather to prove to themselves that they are able to survive the challenge. If the worker lives through the experience and even manages to excel under pressurized circumstances, his existence is validated (Lyng, 1990: 34).

A colorful array of research has been conducted on professions that involve an inordinate amount of risk. For example, in his study of high steel ironworkers, Jack Haas (1977) describes the incredible risks faced as workers perform their work while navigating narrow and often slippery beams twenty stories above the ground. Haas, who worked along with the workers during the study, explains the iron workers’ socialization process, their mechanisms of controlling their work to decrease the level of danger and the way the workers cope with the feelings of fear that might accompany this work.

Based on his observations, the researcher explains that the acknowledgement of risk was not displayed outwardly by the workers (Haas, 1977: 149). In fact, he postulates that because risk and fear are so inherent in the steel work, the workers choose to deal with it collectively by treating it as if it did not exist. Any worker

who did show signs of fear was criticized and shunned by the other workers. As one journeyman in the study pointed out, a worker who is afraid is unpredictable and can actually bring about dangerous consequences (Haas, 1977: 154).

In his study of miners, Fitzpatrick (1980) found that many of the workers were desensitized to the dangerous consequences of their working conditions. Similar findings have been reported in studies of police officers (Dick, 2005), firefighters (Smith, 1999) and paratroopers (Weiss, 1967). Fitzpatrick also discovered that many of the miners he interviewed flouted formal safety regulations. For example, workers admitted that it was not uncommon for a miner to sit on a case of dynamite and smoke a cigarette because the case was the most convenient, dry place to sit down (Fitzpatrick, 1980: 149).

Describing the pervasiveness of danger in the miner's work, Fitzpatrick outlined what he believed to be an "occupational subculture of danger". Familiarity with danger and how to respond to it is expressed in the formation and context of a miners' occupational subculture.

Isolation sets the structural parameters resulting in differential interaction. Through differential interaction, miners form cohesive, self-sufficient work groups. Danger increases the requirement for cohesiveness and self-sufficiency by providing a target against which miners must take mutual, concerted actions

(Fitzpatrick, 1980: 154-155).

To individuals who possess strong self-preservation instincts, a job that includes dangerous elements might provoke an unpleasant fear response. For many, the fight or flight sensation is unpleasant and to be avoided. However, if a person

seeks out and stays in an inherently dangerous job, it is worth questioning whether the danger itself is an aspect of the job that enhances job satisfaction for the employee and increases his or her intent to stay in the job.

2.7 Perceived job alternatives / job market

In the many of the articles describing dirty work situations, the employees attribute their work situation to lack of available employment options. The lack of perceived or actual job opportunity may be due to geographical and sociological determinants. For example, in the 1983 study of beef handlers most workers explained that the lack of lucrative and stable employment opportunities available in the area prompts them to continue their work as beef processors (Thompson & Harred, 1983: 290). Deep sea fishermen tell a similar tale. While some profess to enjoy the incredibly hazardous³ work, others have found they have no other work options and have ended up in the fishing industry as a last resort (Drudi, 1998, 5).

2.7.1 Labour market insulation / Low income neighborhoods

Steel and Griffeth (1989) argue that access to job availability information is an important part of perceived and actual opportunity. This includes an individual's access to networks of friends, family, and colleagues who serve as sources of job leads. Additionally, this network of people must be able to provide reliable and

³ The U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics ranked "Fishers and related fishing workers" the occupation with the highest work-related fatality rates with a fatality rate of 111.8 deaths per 100,000 employed (released in 2008).

timely information on job openings to accurately impact the perception of job-market opportunity (Steel & Griffeth, 1989). Individuals with greater access to job leads most likely have more awareness of their employment prospects. Low-wage unskilled urban workers frequently operate in labour markets that are characterized by limited employment opportunities and large numbers of jobseekers (Reingold, 1999: 1909).

In his 1999 study of labour market insulation among less educated urban workers, Elliott examined the influence of neighborhood poverty and social networks on labour market experiences of less-educated urban job seekers (Elliott, 1999: 199). Based on his findings, Elliott reported that job seekers from high-poverty neighborhoods are significantly more likely than those from low-poverty neighborhoods to use informal contacts to look for work, whether in isolation or in conjunction with formal channels (Elliott: 1987: 207). Further, research suggests that individuals who found their job through a personal contact are, on average, less educated than those who found their job through other methods (Reingold, 1999: 1914).

The 2002 study conducted by Clark and Drinkwater investigated how densely concentrated urban areas could affect employment opportunities for low income minorities (Clark & Drinkwater, 2002: 11). Their work presented various theories to explain how the existence and nature of enclaves could influence employment opportunities for their inhabitants. The researchers found that rates of paid-employment and self-employment were lower and unemployment rates were higher in enclave areas than in less concentrated areas (Clark &

Drinkwater, 2002: 12). They asserted that this disparity was not due to the concentration of people per se but rather to the concomitant low levels of income and demand.

It is also generally inferred that when informal job contacts do exist within high-poverty neighborhoods, they tend to lead to lower-paying jobs than contacts coming from more affluent communities. The quality of the job contacts available to local residents is affected by the residential poverty. Wilson argues that the marginal economic position or weak attachment to the labour force of some is regrettably reinforced by their neighborhood, or social situation (Wilson, 1987: 57).

Wilson explains that neighborhoods characterized by high levels of poverty and joblessness tend to isolate already disadvantaged residents from mainstream resources, opportunities, and role models (*see* Thompson & Harred, 1983: 231). This social isolation, in turn, impedes individual success in the labour market because it denies residents informal job contacts that are critical not only for finding jobs but for finding good jobs that promote prolonged labour force attachment (Wilson, 1987: 67).

2.8 Family / friend tradition

Another way in which people become “stuck” in a dirty job is through social tradition (family and friends) and the comfortability that comes with it. Many family businesses (e.g. funeral homes, garbage hauling companies) exist due to a

need to create “social buffers” from the potentially judgmental views of outsiders (Ashforth et al., 2007: 160). Not only do family and friends form a natural social employment network but also the stigma connected with certain dirty jobs often prompts the workers to retreat into a safe haven where others are performing like jobs. As Perry points out, workers continue to collect garbage “because their fathers did it before them; because their friends and other relatives make the company a familiar and welcoming place” (Perry, 1998:123; *see also* Godschalk, 1979: 8-9).

2.9 Conclusion

Work is said to be dirty if society perceives it to be physically, socially, or morally tainted (Hughes, 1951, 1958). In conjunction with viewing specific jobs as dirty, society has historically also labeled the people who perform this dirty work as dirty or polluted themselves (Douglas, 1966). A natural consequence of this disrespect could be workers who are unable to maintain a strong work identity.

Despite this, research has shown that dirty workers can create and maintain a positive work role identity. Through the presence of strong cohesion and occupational culture, as well as by using taint management devices to reframe, recalibrate, and refocus the meaning of dirty work, individuals can overcome the stigma.

Employee fit is a key component to dirty jobs as well. A good fit between a person and his job and the work environment can improve job satisfaction and job commitment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Given the unpleasant nature of many dirty jobs, a person does need to have a certain affinity or at a minimum at least a tolerance for those conditions. This type of fit could determine a worker's long term contentment in a dirty job. Limited job opportunities as a result of geographical, socioeconomic and traditional influences may also play a crucial role in dirty job staffing. If someone believes this type of work is his best or only option that could provide the impetus to stay in a dirty work position.

The next chapter will look at voluntary employee turnover factors affecting an employee's intention to stay. Areas covered will include traditional theories relating to the desirability and ease of movement as well as more recent theories such as the unfolding model and job embeddedness theory. The chapter will apply employee turnover theory in a dirty work context.

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3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discusses research relating to the origination and evolution of the dirty work concept. This chapter will continue its review of dirty work but with a specific focus on employee turnover and reasons why workers intend to stay or leave their dirty jobs. Because of the significant financial ramifications of employee turnover, a great deal of research attention has been devoted to uncovering clues to preventing voluntary employee departure.

Researchers have examined a variety of areas in hopes of pinpointing the key to optimal employee retention. For example, attitudinal constructs such as: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, as well as job characteristics (e.g. pay, rewards, communication, autonomy, and social opportunities) have been thoroughly researched in connection with turnover decisions. More recently, studies have begun to look at the non-work related factors that can either be the stimulus for an employee to leave a job or alternatively, be the link that encourages an employee to stay in a job. Lee and Mitchell's unfolding turnover model (1994) and the job embeddedness theory created by Mitchell et al. (2001) explore this line of thinking. Most importantly, this chapter will consider these employee turnover theories with particular attention to how they might pertain to dirty work situations and review any available research specifically aimed at dirty work employee turnover.

Despite the significant attention given to the topic (Mobley 1982; Price 1977), no universally accepted framework exists for why people choose to leave a job (Lee & Mitchell, 1994). Cotton and Tuttle (1986), referred to turnover intentions as

an individual's perceived probability of staying or leaving an employing organization (Cotton & Tuttle, 1996). Similarly, Hom and Griffeth (1991) defined turnover intentions as the relative strength of an individual's intent toward voluntary permanent withdrawal from the organization (Hom & Griffeth, 1991).

Research has shown that intent to stay and its converse "intent to leave" are useful predictors of retention and employee turnover (Vandenberg & Barnes-Nelson, 1999; Wells, Roberts, & Medlin, 2002) although predictive ability varies across research. Studies use turnover intent as an important antecedent of actual turnover (Lambert, Hogan & Barton, 2001) or as an outcome in and of itself (Lum, Kervin, Clark, Reid, & Sirola, 1998; Feldman, Sapienza & Kane, 1990).

March and Simon focused on two primary factors affecting employee turnover decisions: desirability of movement and ease of movement. March and Simon considered that an employee's desire to leave an organization was primarily driven by how satisfied that employee was with various aspects of the work environment. The second component, ease of movement, was dictated by the number of external work alternatives available to the employee (March & Simon, 1958).

Many researchers consider the relevant labour market conditions to be the chief aspect determining ease of movement. Another line of research considers ease of movement from the perspective of what the employee would give up by leaving their current job. Mitchell et al. consider this "embeddedness" to be a key

feature in employee turnover decisions (Mitchell et al., 2001). The current state of employee turnover research contemplates an expanded March and Simon's model: 1) an employee's desire to leave; 2) the current labour market conditions and 3) job embeddedness. In sum, ongoing research treats these factors as correlates of turnover, arguing that employees who are less embedded, less satisfied, and or have more alternatives are more likely to quit (Swider, Boswell & Zimmerman, 2011).

Section 3.2 will consider the role of job satisfaction variables in relation to employee turnover. This includes pay and rewards, promotion, supervision, coworkers, nature of the work, task variety, organizational justice and support, and autonomy. Section 3.3 will then discuss organizational commitment. Section 3.4 examines the unfolding model of turnover and 3.5 considers relational perspectives. 3.6 looks at the various components of job embeddedness and section 3.7 will look at person-job fit. Section 3.8 looks at specific studies that relate to employer turnover and section 3.9 will conclude the chapter.

3.2 Job satisfaction

The two most frequently tested attitudinal constructs have been job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Maertz & Campion, 1998; Hom & Griffeth, 1995). In general, studies have suggested that satisfaction and commitment have a significant relationship with employee turnover. The attitudinal nature of satisfaction implies that an individual would tend to approach (or stay with) a satisfying job and avoid (or quit) a dissatisfying job (Spector, 1985: 695). An

examination of this research lineage (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000; Maertz & Campion, 1998) confirms that perceived desirability, (frequently evaluated as job satisfaction, job commitment or other job-related attitudes), is negatively related to turnover.

Job satisfaction has been identified as an important predictor of employee attitudes and behaviors and a correlate for affective organizational commitment (e.g., Freund, 2005; Meyer, Herscovitch, Topolnytsky, 2002). An employee's level of job satisfaction can basically be described as an individual's attitude toward the job—whether the employee finds the job rewarding enough to continue doing it (Thatcher, Stepina & Boyle, 2002). Job satisfaction is typically referred to as an emotional affective response to a job or specific aspects of a job (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Locke (1976) defined it as “. . . a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976: 1304).

Numerous studies have shown that dissatisfied employees are more likely to quit their jobs or be absent than satisfied employees (e.g., Griffeth et al., 2000; Hackett & Guion, 1985; Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985). Job dissatisfaction also appears to be related to other withdrawal behaviors, including lateness, unionization, grievances, drug abuse, and decision to retire (Griffin et al., 2010: 244; Saari & Judge, 2004: 399).

Turnover models often give less attention to impetus-producing factors than to linking or intervening mechanisms (e.g., job satisfaction, intentions to search).

Nevertheless, some models have attempted to address the former issue. For example, models developed by Mobley et al., 1979. Hulin, Roznowski, and Hachiya (1985), and Price and Mueller (1986) identify organizational and contextual factors capable of initiating the turnover process (Hulin et al., 1985; Price & Mueller, 1986). Numerous studies have assessed how certain job characteristics, work experiences and personal characteristics are linked with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and ultimately, the intent to stay with an organization (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Gregersen & Black, 1982; Morrow, 1983; Sager & Johnston, 1989).

Content approaches attempt to determine what sort of variables in the work environment affect an individual's job satisfaction and ultimately, the decision to leave. Martin (1979), Price and Mueller (1981) and Bluedorn (1982) all proposed models proposing specific variables that would relate to employee turnover via satisfaction and intent. Examples of the variables include: distributive justice, instrumental communication, routinization (Martin, 1979); promotion opportunity, pay, and training (Price & Mueller, 1981). The following section points out some of the studies relating to job and organizational features and their effect on employee turnover.

3.2.1 Pay and rewards

Research suggests that employee compensation plays a significant role in both job satisfaction and commitment. Pay dissatisfaction has been found to significantly predict absenteeism and turnover (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Lum et

al., 1998). Hinkin and Tracey (2000) reported that one of the main reasons cited by hotel employees for leaving their jobs was low and inequitable pay (Hinkin & Tracey, 2000). Similarly, an inverse relationship between the wage rate and the probability of a job change was indicated in Lawler's 1987 study of operation workers in the manufacturing industry (Lawler, 1987).

A wide range of dirty jobs pay surprisingly well (e.g. morticians (Thompson, 1991), steel-workers (Haas, 1977), fishermen (Drudi, 1998), garbage handlers (Godschalk, 1979) and exotic dancers (Thompson & Harred, 2005). The appeal of money can serve as one of the motivators for remaining in dirty, dangerous or morally tainted jobs (Thompson & Harred, 1983: 290).

3.2.2 Promotion

Opportunities for internal promotion and career advancement have been reported to impact employees' attitudes and behaviors (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Price, 2001). Promotional chances refer to "the degree of potential upward occupational mobility within an organization" (Kim, Price, Mueller, & Watson, 1996). Promotional opportunities typically heighten an individual's affective response and behavioral commitment thereby, guaranteeing job security and other coveted future rewards (e.g., income, power, status) to the employees (Kim et al., 1996).

Yin and Yang's (2002) meta-analysis reported that the strongest organizational factors related to nurse turnover intentions were lack of internal promotion and career advancement opportunity (Yin & Yang, 2002). Dissatisfaction with

promotional processes, insufficient promotional opportunities, and stifled organizational advancement are often cited as primary causes of employee withdrawal behaviors including turnover (Johnston, Griffeth, Burton, & Phillips-Carson, 1993; Stumpf & Dawley, 1981).

In the Cardiff hotel room attendant study conducted by Powell and Watson, 2006, 74 percent of the sample said they were generally satisfied with their present job (Powell & Watson, 2006: 307). Hotel room attendant work includes both physical and social stigma because it involves the handling of physical dirt and the workers must endure a perceived servile relationship to others (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Despite this status and reputation for leaving jobs often, almost half of the room attendants believed there were promotion opportunities for them in their hotel and 68 percent expressed interest in promotion within their department. The researchers reported that few advancement opportunities actually existed at the research organization at the time of the study. Still, the workers believed it was possible and hoped to secure advancement. This was one of several contributing factors to healthy job satisfaction and low labour turnover among the attendants (Powell & Watson, 2006: 307).

3.2.3 Supervision

Existing research has shown that employees frequently cite the supervisor as an impetus to turnover (Hanmer & Smith, 1978). Employee satisfaction increases when the immediate supervisor is understanding, friendly, offers praise for good performance, listens to employees' opinions and shows personal interest in them (Robbins, 1993). Vecchio and Norris found in their 1996 study that there was an inverse correlation between satisfaction with supervision and turnover. Their research suggested that employees who were satisfied with their supervisors were less likely to leave (Vecchio & Norris, 1996).

3.2.4 Coworkers and socialization opportunities

Previous research has looked at the relationships between interpersonal relations and various work outcomes. Riordan and Griffeth (1995) demonstrated that employees' perceptions of friendship opportunities in the workplace were related to job satisfaction and job involvement (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). In addition, Miller and Labovitz (1973) found that the probability of an individual leaving his or her organization is directly related to the proportion of esteemed colleagues, friends, and contacts who have already left the organization (Miller & Labovitz, 1973). These studies underscore the potential role that feelings of relatedness toward work colleagues might have on motivation and, in turn, its influence on satisfaction, well-being, and turnover intentions.

In line with the research emphasis in the current study, Hu, Kaplan and Dalal (2010) found that blue-collar workers may establish a closer relationship with

their co-workers and thus assess them from a more general and less differentiated perspective. To the degree that blue-collar workers get to know each other while engaging in these interdependent tasks, they may draw less of a distinction between who they like and who is a good worker. Another explanation is that blue-collar workers may view each other as more of “comrades” than simply co-workers (e.g., due to a shared distrust in management). Additionally, they may cohere especially strongly in order to cope with the stigma they might perceive experiencing as a function of performing physical labour on a university campus (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

3.2.5 Nature of the work / Satisfaction with the work itself

The actual work duties and the manner in which they are carried out often factor into an employee’s overall job satisfaction. The nature of work satisfaction is defined as the employees’ satisfaction with the type of work they do (Spector, 1997). Employees prefer work that is mentally challenging in that it provides them with opportunities to use their skills and abilities and offers a variety of tasks, freedom and feedback on how well they are doing (Robbins, 1993).

The formation of specific goals, feedback on progress towards these goals, and reinforcement of desired behavior all stimulate motivation and require communication. The fewer distortions, ambiguities and incongruities that occur in communication within organizations, the more satisfied employees will feel with regard to their work (Robbins, 1993). Job stress, repetitive work, role ambiguity and role overload have all been found to lead to dissatisfaction (Kahn,

Wolfe, Quinn, & Rosenthal, 1964; Price & Mueller, 1986; *see also* Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

3.2.6 *Task variety*

Job variety is simply the degree of variation in a job (Price & Mueller, 1986). Some jobs require role performance that is highly repetitive, whereas other jobs have significant degrees of variety in the required tasks and how they are performed (Mueller, Boyer, Price, & Iverson, 1994: 187). Varying job tasks provide challenges and sense of meaningfulness at work by stretching employees' abilities and skills (Hackman & Oldham, 1975).

Iverson and Deery's (1997) study of hotel employees in Australia, ascertained that employees whose jobs are repetitive are less satisfied, less committed, and consequently less apt to stay in the organization (Iverson & Deery, 1997). Blau and Lunz's (1998) study of medical technologists similarly demonstrated that task repetitiveness is positively related to job turnover (Blau & Lunz, 1998).

Task variety regularly appears as a positive in many dirty job studies (Perry, 1998). The unconventional nature of many dirty jobs can result in less repetitiveness (e.g. police work, firefighting, bike messengers). In Perry's study of garbage workers (1998) he found that many of those interviewed cited job variety as a captivating aspect of their work. In one interview, a worker pointed out that certain routes offered an especially seedy view of the world's underbelly. He graphically described some of the horrible, yet captivating scenes he had witnessed over time on one particular route. In the early hours, his crew would

encounter stumbling drunks, prostitutes, grotesque crime scenes including even finding dead babies in the garbage (Perry, 1998: 114). Despite these ghastly scenes, this worker still felt that he and his coworkers found working on a garbage truck to be enjoyable due to its never-ending variety and macabre excitement (Perry, 1998: 114).

3.2.7 Distributive justice

Distributive justice has been found to have a significant, direct negative impact on turnover intentions (Aryee & Chay, 2001; Price & Mueller, 1986). Distributive justice reflects employees' perceptions of the outcomes they receive based on their evaluations of the end state of the allocations process (e.g. pay, benefits, or promotion) (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998).

3.2.8 Individual and group autonomy

Autonomy has been linked to such important variables as employee performance, work satisfaction, job involvement, absenteeism and satisfaction with supervision (Griffeth et al., 2000; Price & Mueller, 1981, 1986; Samad, 2006). Extant research has shown that autonomy is negatively related to turnover intentions (Ahuja et al., 2007; Spector, 1986).

Hackman and Oldham (1975) define autonomy as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used to carry it out” (Hackman and Oldham, 1975: 162). Chung (1977) discussed autonomy in terms

of the degree to which an individual is able to: 1) determine his own work methods, 2) pace himself and have control over work schedules, and 3) have some say over goal setting (Chung, 1977). On the whole, autonomy appears to revolve around three distinct aspects: methods, scheduling and criteria (Breugh, 1985: 555).

Based on the work of Turner and Lawrence (1965) and Kiggundu (1983), Breugh (1985) sets forth several facets for conceptualizing work autonomy (Kiggundu, 1983; Turner & Lawrence, 1965). Work method autonomy is the degree of discretion / choice individuals have regarding the procedures they utilize in going about their work. Work scheduling autonomy concerns the extent to which workers feel they can control the scheduling/sequencing/timing of their work activities and work criteria. Autonomy gauges the degree to which workers have the ability to modify or choose the criteria used for evaluating their performance (Breugh, 1985: 556).

Team task autonomy refers to the freedom of a team to make decisions about goals (what), work methods (how), planning issues (when) and the distribution of work among team members (who) (Breugh, 1985; Evans & Fischer, 1992; Molleman, 2000). Barry and Stewart (1997) and Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argued that if team task autonomy is high, individual team members have many opportunities to grow into different roles and to shape their own work. Team task autonomy enhances the impact of worker and team characteristics on team functioning, and therefore it is likely that team task autonomy will moderate the relation between team attributes, which stem from the individual

member's personality traits, and team outcomes (Barry & Stewart, 1997; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Like job variety, autonomy on the job is often a selling point for dirty jobs. Control, even on a limited scale, can create "a sense of purposeful connection to the work enterprise". Rather than feeling a depersonalized detachment, a worker may feel more involvement in the job task (Blaunder, 1964:26; *see also* Kidder, 2006: 33).

In her study of home based long term caregivers for the elderly and disabled, (Stacey, 2005) describes how autonomy on the job is rewarding for the workers. The author describes how home care aides are given general guidelines regarding their duties at patient homes (Stacey, 2005: 845). However, because workers are not directly supervised at the home sites, they can set their own schedule throughout the day. The caregivers who are typically unskilled, untrained and lowly paid are free to use their own discretion when assigning sequence and pace of tasks. Referred to as "practical autonomy" (Wardell, 1992), this type of freedom on the job is a way for workers to create and manage their own environments within certain constraints. Stacey proposes that this control over their labour is a significant factor in attaining dignity in the workplace thereby enhancing their overall job satisfaction (Stacey, 2005: 845; *see also* Powell & Watson, 2006: 301).

In Hood's study, of custodial work, satisfaction with one's job is determined primarily by the presence or absence of others. On the night shift, workers can

have a sense of control and ownership of their assigned areas. During the day shift, workers are continually reminded through interaction with building tenants that they are low status workers cleaning up other people's messes rather than self-managers of their work schedule (Hood, 1988).

3.3 Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment has been defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization, which is characterized by belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday et al., 1982:27).

Research indicates that organizational commitment negatively relates to turnover (Bluedorn, 1982; Griffeth et al., 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Drawing largely on Mowday, Porter, and Steers's (1982) concept of commitment, which in turn looked at earlier work by Kanter (1968) and Meyer and Allen (1984) initially proposed that a distinction be made between affective and continuance commitment (Kanter, 1968; Mowday et al., 1982). Affective commitment describes an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. While continuance commitment denotes the perceived costs associated with leaving the organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) later suggested a third distinguishable, normative commitment, which reflects a perceived obligation to remain in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

With regard to the consequences of commitment, all three forms of organizational commitment correlate negatively with withdrawal cognition, turnover intention, and turnover (Meyer et al., 2002: 40). Employees with high continuance commitment should intend to remain with their employer to avoid the sacrifices associated with leaving, regardless of their level of affective or normative commitment. Accordingly, any form of commitment should be adequate to produce an intention to remain.

The converse of this concept is not necessarily true. Low levels of continuance commitment should not lead to an intention to leave unless affective and normative commitment are low as well. Therefore, the link between continuance commitment and turnover intention will be attenuated when the sample includes employees with low continuance commitment and high affective or normative commitment. The same situation holds true for the other two forms of commitment (Meyer et al., 2002: 40).

3.4 The Unfolding model

Lee and Mitchell's (1994) unfolding model moves traditional turnover theory away from a reliance on the rationalistic approaches to a focus on psychological thought processes (e.g., image theory). The unfolding model introduced several new concepts to the turnover-theory literature. Based on the work of Beach (1990), Lee & Mitchell (1994) developed their multi-path model of turnover process (Beach, 1990; Lee & Mitchell, 1994). The "unfolding model" describes different psychological paths followed by employees when they decide to leave

an organization. The major components of the unfolding model include scripts, shocks, image violations, job satisfaction, and job search (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).

3.5 Relational perspectives

Just as the Lee and Mitchell's unfolding model contemplates how external factors or shocks might prompt an employee to leave an organization, some scholars have considered whether links within the organization or the community could be a factor in an employee's decision to stay in a job. Several studies have looked at how factors unrelated to the work itself could influence an employee to remain in his job – even a dirty job (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999); (Mossholder, et al, 2005). As Maertz and Campion (1998) noted, positive work relationships can influence individuals to remain with an organization despite their disliking various features of it (Maertz & Campion, 1998).

In his (2001) study, Burt asserted that connections between individuals and an organization are influenced by the degree of embedding they experience (Burt, 2001). Individuals having a higher number of ties to others affiliated with an organization are more embedded and deem the organization to be of greater importance to them. Burt found that the extent of embeddedness inhibited the decay of individuals' organizational attachment. His results were consistent with an earlier study by McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic (1992) that showed more contacts in a social network led to longer membership duration; more ties meant less turnover (McPherson et al., 1992).

Kahn (1998) argued that relationships at work reflect not only necessary task-related links, but a system of deeper attachments that serve collective emotional needs. To the extent that individuals lack a supportive system of relationships, they may become emotionally disengaged, withdraw from coworkers, and eventually leave the organization. The degree of organizational attachment increases as individuals develop higher-quality social networks. A relational systems perspective suggests that non-cognitive elements, such as respect, warmth, and personal regard should be acknowledged as essential in such relationships (Kahn, 1998).

To understand how work relationships may affect turnover, it is useful to consider underlying processes from which relational ties emerge. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) implies that processes fostering workplace ties influence individuals interacting with other organization members. Social exchanges rest on the notion that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some future time (Mossholder, Settoon & Henagan 2005: 607).

Although the actions may be mandated or mutually beneficial, the deeds often take on value because they symbolize the quality of the relationships. Leaving the relationships may produce a feeling of loss, which in turn makes withdrawal a costly proposition to individuals. Maertz and Griffeth (2004) identified “constituent forces” (attachments to others in an organization) as one of eight distinctive motivational forces underlying voluntary turnover (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004).

3.6 Job embeddedness

The idea of employee links has led to the creation of the job embeddedness theory by Mitchell et al., (2001) that contemplates an employee becoming embedded in his job due to all the interconnected elements that comprise a person's work and personal life. Following the ideas of Mobley's (1977) concept of "the cost of quitting" and Lee and Mitchell's (1994), "unfolding model", Mitchell et al., (2001) proposed a construct to explain the complex web that compels employees to remain in an organization.

Research by Rusbult and Farrell (1983) and Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers and Mainous (1988) showed that turnover decisions are influenced by people's comparisons between the investments made in their job or organization, the rewards they receive, the quality of alternatives, and the costs associated with working for a particular organization—and these comparisons change over time (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983; Rusbult, Farrell, Rogers and Mainous, 1988).

The theory of job embeddedness stems from the idea that decisions to stay are swayed by factors both at work and at home. Strands of a person's life are woven together to connect an employee and one's family in a psychological, social, and financial web that includes work and nonwork friends, groups, and the community and the physical environment. The quantity, quality and complexity of the links determine the extent of one's embeddedness (Mitchell et al, 2001).

The Mitchell et al. study was comprised of 177 grocery store and 208 hospital employees. Their findings intimated that embeddedness is negatively correlated

with employees' intention to leave and with actual turnover. The study also found that embeddedness improves the prediction of voluntary turnover beyond the prediction based on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived job alternatives and job search (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Lee et al., (2004) sought to extend the original formulation by considering on- and off-the-job embeddedness separately. These studies indicated that off-the job embeddedness predicted absences and turnover (over and above that of job satisfaction and organizational commitment), whereas on-the-job embeddedness did not. Conversely, they also reported that on-the-job embeddedness predicted organizational citizenship behavior and in-role job performance (again, over and above satisfaction and commitment), whereas off-the job embeddedness did not (Lee et al., 2004).

The concept of job embeddedness is rooted in the idea that people stay working at organizations based on three principles: Links, Fit and Sacrifice (Mitchell, et al., 2001). Links are formal or informal connections between an employee and institutions or people. Job embeddedness suggests that a number of threads connect an employee and his or her family in a social, psychological, and financial web that includes work and non-work friends, groups, the community, and the physical environment (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Fit characterizes an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his or her environment (Mitchell et al., 2001). According to the theory, an employee's personal values, career goals, and plans for the

future must “fit” with the larger corporate culture and the demands of his or her immediate job (e.g., job knowledge, skills and abilities). In addition, a person will consider how well he or she fits the community and surrounding environment. The weather, amenities and general culture of the location in which one resides are relevant to perceptions of community fit. Job embeddedness assumes that the better the fit, the higher the likelihood that an employee will feel professionally and personally tied to the organization (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Sacrifice represents the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that are forfeited by organizational departure (Mitchell et al., 2001). These costs may be physical or psychological. Leaving an organization may induce personal losses (e.g., losing contact with friends, personally relevant projects, or perks). The more an employee will lose from leaving, the more difficult it will be to sever employment with the organization.

Leaving may mean giving up the advantages associated with tenure in the organization (pay, corner office), as well as the personal losses such as close friendships with coworkers or benefits unique to the organization. Similarly, leaving a community that is familiar and comfortable can be difficult for employees. For example, the loss of the feeling of belonging to a community, the loss of favored local restaurants, and selling the home the person’s children were raised in could influence the community sacrifice dimension.

Since its inception, the theory of job embeddedness has fostered various related research studies. Crossley, Bennett, Jex and Burnfield, (2007) sought to establish

a global measure of job embeddedness (Crossley et al., 2007). Holtom and Inderrieden (2006) argued that employee embeddedness can serve to buffer against shocks that lead people to consider withdrawal (Holtom & Inderrieden, 2006).

Similarly, in Burton, Holtom, Sablinski, Mitchell, and Lee's 2010 study, the researchers discovered that on-the-job embeddedness helps reduce the impact of shocks (i.e. thoughts of leaving linked to on-the-job negative events) on organizational citizenship and overall job performance. Further, they found that "individuals who experienced negative events and thought about leaving but were highly embedded, chose to invest their energies in ways that could help the organization" (Burton et al., 2010: 47).

Many studies have illustrated that embeddedness plays a key moderating role in related turnover decision-making. For example, Allen proposed in 2006 that socialization tactics influence newcomer turnover by embedding newcomers more extensively into the organization. Results indicated that on the-job embeddedness is negatively related to turnover and mediates relationships between some socialization tactics and turnover (Allen, 2006; *see also* Hom, Tsui, Wu, Lee, Zhang and Fu, 2009). Swider et al. (2011) found that job embeddedness played a significant role in the link between job search and actual turnover (Swider, 2011).

Stroth's 2010 pragmatic study of rural nursing jobs evaluated methods to "embed" employees to decrease nursing staff turnover (Stroth, 2010:105). The

author proposed that a retention plan should look at the fit, links, and sacrifice for both the organization and community. A rural hospital might want to ensure a good fit between the nurse and hospital. Examples include: “use of personal development plans, realistic job descriptions, frequent cross-departmental competencies, career planning for long-term-goal attainment, flexible scheduling or self-scheduling, education sessions, and means for in-house advancement opportunities, which may reflect the nurse’s perceived compatibility or comfort with the organization” (Stroth, 2010).

On the job links can be influenced by development of teams for long-term projects and mentoring programs. Links off the job might be promoted by the hospital supporting community service projects and allowing employees days off to take part in these activities can increase community links (Stroth, 2010).

The job embeddedness construct makes two main contributions to the turnover literature. First, it significantly expands the scope of variables researchers consider when trying to understand motivations for remaining in a job, such as the inclusion of non-attitudinal determinants of turnover. Second, embeddedness includes consideration of off-the-job factors like fit with one’s neighbors and community— a contribution that is more subtle and theoretical in nature.

Job embeddedness is premised on the notion that many people rarely consider leaving their jobs because they are so immersed in their environments. This realistic understanding of human psychology can guide continued efforts to understand why people stay in their jobs. More specifically, peripheral factors

such as family situations, commuting distance, and community ties might provide useful insight into why a worker stays in a dirty job.

3.7 Employee fit

Research suggests that employee fit serves as a significant factor of employee satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions (Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Fit has been found to be positively related to job involvement, career success, health and adaptation, organizational effectiveness, and to lower stress and turnover (Blau, 1987), (Cable and Judge, 1996). Intent to quit and turnover are likely to be influenced by multiple types of fit because the construct represents “attitudes or behaviors relevant to the total work experience” (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001).

Many of the fit dimensions can be applied to dirty work situations. Person-job (P-J) fit relates to the current study as it highlights the relationship between a person’s abilities and the demands of a certain job or the desires of a person and the attributes of a specific job (Edwards, 1991, Kristof, 1996). Person-environment (P-E) and Person-organizational (P-O) fit might also be relevant due to its connection to Ashforth’s theory of employee’s identification and dirty work.

The concept of person-environment (P-E) fit is broadly defined as “the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when

their characteristics are well matched” (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005: 281; *see also* Holland, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Schneider 1987).

Research on P-E fit is rooted in several theories, including the Attraction-Selection-Attrition theory (Schneider, 1987), Holland's (1973, 1996) theory of vocational behavior, and interactional psychology (Schneider, Smith, & Goldstein, 2000; Terborg, 1981; Lewin, 1935). All of these theories acknowledge the interaction between an employee and the work environment. Further, they propose that the “correspondence or fit between individuals and their environments yields positive psychological consequences” (Erhardt, 2006: 194).

Person-job fit considers the relationship between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work. Existing research has outlined two basic conceptualizations of the PJ fit (e.g., Kristof-Brown, 2005; Edwards, 1991; Kristof, 1996). The first is the demands-abilities fit, in which employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities correspond with what the job necessitates. The second form of PJ follows when employees' “needs, desires, or preferences are met by the jobs that they perform” (Kristof-Brown, 2005: 284-5).

Saks and Ashforth's (1997) study found that employee perceptions of P-J fit were positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational identification, and negatively correlated with intentions to quit and stress symptoms. Perceptions of P-O fit were negatively related to intentions to quit and turnover. Furthermore, perceptions of fit mediated the relationships

between job information sources and self-esteem with job satisfaction, intentions to quit, and turnover (Saks and Ashforth, 1997: 416).

3.7.1 Person - organization fit

Person-organization fit has been defined as: “the compatibility between people and organizations that occurs when at least one entity provides what the other needs, they share similar fundamental characteristics, or both” (Kristof, 1996, 4, 5).

The roots of P-O fit research can be traced back to Schneider’s (1987) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) framework. Schneider argued that individuals do not arbitrarily enter into situations, but rather seek out settings that are attractive to them. Further, he proposed that attraction to, selection into, and longevity within an organization are all determined by the perceived similarity between the person and the work environment (i.e. person-organization fit). Schneider and his colleagues stated, “People’s preferences for particular organizations are based upon an implicit estimate of the congruence of their own personal characteristics and the attributes of potential work organizations” (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995: 749). Individuals assess the degree of similarity between their personality, attitudes and values and the organization’s values, goals, processes, and culture (Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). Based on the ASA model, if an employee is a good fit with the organization he will stay but conversely, if there is not a good fit between the employee and the organization he will leave voluntarily or be terminated.

3.7.2 Person-job fit/ person-vocation fit

Person-job fit is defined as the match between the abilities of a person and the demands of a job or the needs/desires of a person and what is provided by a job (Edwards, 1991). The components of needs-supplies perspective may include the desires of the individuals and the characteristics and attributes of the job that may satisfy those desires. An individual's desires may include goals (Locke, Saari, Shaw & Latham, 1981), interests (Campbell & Hansen, 1981), psychological needs (Dawes & Lofquist, 1984), and values (Locke, 1976).

3.7.2.1 Holland vocational choices

According to Holland (1992), workers are attracted to a given occupation by their particular personalities and other variables that constitute their backgrounds. Central to Holland's theory was the assumption that one chooses an occupation to satisfy one's preferred modal personality type. It was Holland's (1992) view that both people and work environments can be categorized as one of six types. Occupations are not discrete entities but can be meaningfully grouped into six ordered categories (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) based on shared psychological features. These features can be used to describe either environments or individuals, and vocational behaviors are influenced largely by the match between these two.

A key construct in Holland's 1992 theory is congruence. Congruence describes the degree of fit between an individual's personality type and current or prospective work environment. A person is in a congruent work environment when his or her personality type matches the occupational environment.

According to Holland (1992), individuals tend to be more satisfied and perform better in environments that match (or are congruent with) their personality types (Holland, 1992: 25).

Holland further contended that people search for work environments that will allow them to exercise their skills, abilities, and values. In reviewing recent studies, Sharf (2002) concluded that research findings supported the belief that matching a worker's personality type with its corresponding work environment resulted in greater job satisfaction and stability of choice (Sharf, 2002).

3.8 Dirty work specific studies relating to employee turnover

In 2012, Lopina, Rogelberg and Howell devoted an entire study to employee turnover in dirty work occupations, with a specific focus on pre-entry individual characteristics (Lopina, Rogelberg & Howell, 2012). Lopina et al. looked to Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) and Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989) for possible explanations of why dirty workers stay or leave their jobs.

It is important to point out that the current study on dirty work employee intention to stay does not attempt to test Lopina's theories which focus primarily on pre-entry individual characteristics prior to hire. Characteristics and attitudes found in existing workers are the emphasis of the current research. However, Lopina et al.'s work is relevant to research lineage on dirty work. Therefore, the study warrants inclusion in the literature review (Lopina et al., 2012).

Building on Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes and Haslam (2009) work on self-group identity compatibility, newcomers to dirty work may have a more difficult time adopting their new social identity because its stigmatized nature is incompatible with their existing non-tainted social identities. The researchers surmised that newcomers to dirty work not supplied with sufficient job information prior to hire would be more likely to turnover due to being “less prepared” for the stigma attached to the job (Iyer et al., 2009; Lopina et al., 2012).

The study also considered how taint management strategies (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421) could assist workers to gain acceptance of their work roles and be less likely to quit. Further, that acceptance and enactment of occupational coping ideologies reinforce organizational identification which has been linked to decreased turnover (Mael & Ashforth, 1995).

Lopina et al.’s research used a sample of animal care workers whose jobs required them to regularly euthanize animals. Animal euthanasia is a task associated with physical taint (due to its contact with death) and moral taint. The study included surveying new hires to assess their dispositions (negative affectivity, maladaptive coping style) and perceptions (job information, career commitment, and belief in the value of the job) prior to situational influences that would be encountered once they began doing the stigmatized tasks (Lopina et al., 2012). The researchers then followed up with turnover data within two months of hire.

Results confirmed that individuals who had more access to information prior to hire were more committed to their career, had a stronger belief in the value of the job and were higher in negative affectivity were less likely to turnover within their first two months of employment (Lopina et al., 2012: 403). Additionally, individuals with maladaptive coping styles were more likely to turnover. The study strongly suggests that access to job information before beginning employment may be acutely important for dirty workers in terms of both “the stress experience and positive identity formation” (Lopina et al., 2012: 403). Specifically, the more a worker knows before commencing a dirty job, the less likely he or she will “experience the entry shock of a negative social backlash; therefore, the identity threat is less salient to them” (Lopina et al., 2012: 403). Likewise, the more a newcomer knows prior to entering a dirty occupation, the better they are able to assess their personal fit with their new work peers and positively identify with the group (Lopina et al., 2012: 403).

Interestingly, the study also finds that workers who come to the job with a higher negative affectivity are less likely to leave the dirty job (Lopina, 2012: 406). Although previous research has indicated that negative affectivity is positively correlated with turnover intentions and withdrawal behaviors (Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993; Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004: 25), little study has been undertaken to determine if negative affectivity is a predictor of actual turnover.

The animal care researchers surmised that based on the COR theory, the negative aspects of dirty work may not be as salient to individuals with higher negative affectivity. Therefore, they are less likely to perceive resource threat (Lopina et

al., 2012: 404). The finding that workers higher in negative affectivity are less likely to leave dirty work has interesting practical implications for dirty work organizations hiring practices and warrants further exploration (Lopina et al. 2012). In general, this research furthers the understanding of dirty worker turnover patterns and can shed light on ways to lessen the likelihood of turnover (at least in the early stages of employment).

3.9 Conclusion

The themes surrounding employee turnover are diverse and multi-layered. This chapter looks at the prominent theories relating to employee turnover. March and Simon (1958) provided the foundation of desirability and ease of movement upon which new theories have been built. March and Simon considered that an employee's desire to leave an organization was primarily driven by how satisfied that employee was with various aspects of the work environment. The second component, ease of movement, was dictated by the number of external work alternatives available to the employee (March & Simon, 1958).

This chapter also considered how features of the work and work environment affect the desirability to remain in a job. This included: job satisfaction, variety, autonomy, the nature of the work, distributive justice, and employee-job fit. The second component, ease of movement, was also tested with the perceived job alternatives construct.

While traditional approaches continue to be relevant, emerging theories such as Lee and Mitchell's unfolding model (1994) and the job embeddedness construct (Mitchell et al., 2001) also lend clarity to this complex subject. Different organizational contexts and work types call for distinct lines of reasoning and research tactics.

This chapter also discussed dirty work specific literature that relates to employee turnover. Lopina et al. (2011) analyzed the effect of pre-entry information to employee retention in the dirty work context of animal euthanasia. This study linked employee retention (from a pre-entry information perspective) and dirty work. While related to the current study, there are still very distinct differences in the subject matter.

Employee intention to stay is based on a multitude of factors. In addition to job characteristics, the idea of employee fit and the proper vocational choice are relevant to dirty worker retention. This chapter sought to delineate the most prominent employee retention theories within the realm of dirty work. The next chapter will discuss the research company structure and the management style. This will provide context for the worker circumstances and organizational setting.

Chapter 4 – Contextual considerations of the study

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the contextual framework within the research company. The first section will discuss the corporate structure, managerial hierarchy and the type of services the company provides. The chapter will also report the depot locations where interviews and surveying took place. The daily job responsibilities of the operations-level worker will be covered in depth as they are integral to this study. Aspects of worker demographics, pay, benefits, and working hours will also be described.

Given the study's focus on the dirty conditions of the employees' work environment, those components of the employee's job will be depicted with considerable attention. Additionally, this chapter will discuss company policies and management practices that dictate how work is carried out. This information was obtained through preliminary interviews of each country location CEO and Operations Manager. Specific attention will be given to the degree of autonomy accorded the workers as these attitudes are contextually relevant to the study.

4.2 The Company

The research organization is a corporate holding company based in the United Kingdom. The enterprise specializes in the protection and management of void properties in the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. The company had worldwide group turnover in 2011 of £139.7 million. The process utilized by the company to secure properties consists of

fitting modular sized window guards, steel doors and adjustable steel sheeting externally to vacant property openings.

The company also offers its clients property cleaning and clearing services which involves: changing and removing fittings, clearing debris and cleaning up after squatters and trespassers. In some locations, they also install alarm systems and make other security-oriented alterations to the property including anti-climb and anti-graffiti paint. The company's primary worksites include: public/government-owned housing, and bank-owned foreclosure properties. At the time of data collection, there was only one competitor company using a comparable system to secure properties in the United Kingdom and France. There were no viable competitors in the United States offering this exact service.

4.2.1 Corporate structure

In addition to a corporate headquarters in each country, the business carries out its operations from regional depots. The United Kingdom contains 23 depots. The United States and France are covered by twelve and seven depots respectively. Italy, Germany and the Netherlands are serviced by several depots each but they have not been included in this study due to their limited sizes.

4.2.1.1 Depot configuration

At the time of data collection, the research company employed 317 operations-level workers in the United Kingdom. The depots were scattered across England with a couple located in Scotland. The surveyed locations include: Leeds, Hull,

Staffordshire, Nottingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Carlisle, Merseyside, Wirral, Bolton, London/Borehamwood and Kilmarnock (in Scotland).

In France, 60 questionnaires were distributed and 33 (55 percent) were completed by employees from Paris, Mautigny au Goelle, Wissous, St. Denis, and Vitrolles. In the United States, 107 surveys were distributed and 78 were returned (73 percent). The United States headquarters are located in Chicago, Illinois with the remaining depot locations dispersed in large cities around the country including sites in: Los Angeles, Atlanta, New Orleans, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Detroit and Miami.

4.2.2 Company organization at country location

Each country location functions as its own corporate entity. Although there are slight variations in each country's staffing, all have a Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Directors of Sales, Marketing, Quality control and Operations as well as Depot Managers. Each headquarter office contains a sales staff and administrative support personnel.

Both management and operations-level interviews indicated that human resource functions have traditionally been neglected by the organization. Primarily, human resources policies and practices were left to administrative staff who wielded no substantive authority in the organization. This lack of attention was

reflected in employee complaints in the survey comments directed at upper management.

At the time of data collection for the current study, France was the only country subsidiary to employ a Manager of Human Resources. A lengthy interview with that individual [hereinafter “Gould”] revealed the great involvement government regulations play in French workplaces and the amount of time that is expended by employers to ensure compliance.

The staff is unionized only in the France locations. There is no union presence in the United Kingdom and United States depots. Employee discipline and human resource issues are handled at the depot manager level if minor and the regional operations manager is involved in more serious issues. The management style reflected across the organization as a whole will be discussed in greater length later in this chapter.

4.3 Operations-level employees

This study targets operations-level workers. In addition to the Director of Operations, this division of the company contains a National Operations Manager, Regional Operations Controllers and Local Operations Controllers. Within each depot, three levels of workers perform installations at customer worksites: the Depot manager (*Chef d'entrepôt*), Team leader (*Chef d'équipe*) and Fitter (*Poseur*).

4.3.1 Job duties and work conditions

For the purposes of this study, the required tasks and working conditions of the employees are highly relevant. The workers are responsible for cleaning, clearing and securing vacant properties. Workers haul discarded possessions out of the buildings and garden spaces. Using a variety of equipment (e.g., industrial-strength chemicals and disinfectants), workers sweep and mop hard surface floors, vacuum and scrub carpet, wipe sinks, counters and toilets.

In addition to the cleaning, the employees fit the doors and windows with specially designed steel screens which allow key entry access but will prevent unauthorized break-ins of the property. The strenuous work involves constant movement (i.e., kneeling, lifting and placement of steel door and window screens weighing in excess of 60 kilos).

According to Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999) model, physically tainted dirty work includes work that: a) deals with actual dirt or filthy and/or b) is potentially dangerous or hazardous to the worker's health. The research sample workers spend the majority of their working hours in abandoned public housing and foreclosed apartments or houses. The properties are often located in distressed areas of cities, notorious for criminal activity.

Many units still contain filthy, discarded personal belongings. Workers report finding drug paraphernalia, weapons, human excrement, bug infestations and even dead bodies. In the case of tenants being evicted from the units, a company

team may be called in immediately to prevent theft of unit fixture items. In these situations, police presence is often required due to potential violence stemming from the evicted tenants or neighbors. Workers also encounter squatters or trespassers who have taken up residence illegally in the units if the property is left unsecured for any length of time. Police escorts may be requested in these instances as well.

4.3.1.1 Work structure

The majority of the staff is male, employed full time and generally working standard daytime hours (8 hour shifts). However, there was mention of overtime hours being a usual occurrence. While this offers increased compensation, many employees deemed the overtime hours to be a significant burden which interfered with their private lives.

Additionally, given the often emergent need to secure a property immediately, each depot assigns certain workers to be “on-call” during overnight hours. The United Kingdom operations situated just north of London, is the only location that has a work shift devoted to overnight hours. Those shifts are rotated among operations employees so no one works only third shift hours.

On average, worker starting pay is roughly 10 percent above the statutory minimum wage for the area. Workers in larger cities (e.g., Paris, London and Los Angeles) are typically paid a slightly higher wage due to the increased cost of living. All workers are given annual pay raises which range from 2-5 percent.

The percentage offered is given uniformly to the operations staff rather than reflecting individual performance.

According to the United States CEO, to create employee loyalty, the company offers loyalty bonuses to operations workers. Managers, sales and administrative staff are not included in the loyalty program. During the first four years working for the company, employees will receive a small monthly bonus (typically \$20 per month to start). The loyalty bonus over the four years' time is capped at \$1000. Additionally, all employees receive a discretionary holiday bonus based on longevity and performance in the year.

The employees are assigned to teams of four people who they will work with consistently. Workers are placed in teams based on matching people with complementary talents. Each team is assigned and accountable for a van that comes complete with an expensive array of tools. The team leader is also responsible for a company laptop computer and Blackberry phone for work related communication while on site.

Operations workers typically meet with the depot manager immediately upon arrival. At this meeting, teams will receive project assignments for the day. Teams normally receive one or two locations to secure each day but some projects requiring more time due to size and condition of the structure. With large, emergent job assignments, teams may be required to work beyond the scheduled eight-hour work day for which the workers receive overtime pay.

Following work site assignments, teams collect the specific equipment needed for the first job and load the team's van. The company has implemented several minor reward programs to promote safety and efficiency. These rewarded behaviors include: safe driving records (i.e. no accidents or speeding violations) and not losing tools on job sites. This team design and the autonomy that accompanies it will be discussed in greater length in the section on managerial style later in the chapter.

4.4 Standardization of operations

Visits to depot locations and observation of the processes at work sites revealed enormous similarities across the organization. The physical layout of the depot warehouses is markedly similar. The employee work assignments and how workers are trained to install screens or clean properties is also similar at the different country locations. In this regard, the company exercises tight management control. However, workers carry out the assignments with little supervision on site.

It was apparent that the high level managers had similar ideologies relating to managing their workers. In keeping with the strong template mentioned previously, the parent company seemed to prefer a particular type of manager. It appeared that the same "brand" of CEO was placed in each subsidiary (i.e., similar backgrounds, education levels, work philosophies, and management styles).

Of the six subsidiary chiefs interviewed, the majority were from the United Kingdom. The company maintains a centralized website with links to the individual country sites. The office spaces are patterned in a similar fashion. The operations workers use identical trucks, uniforms and equipment. Furthermore, the administration is similar (except for an HR manager in France) and the sales and marketing structure are all the same. The company also maintains a strict reporting requirement for the subsidiary CEOs which promotes frequent communication with the headquarters.

The similarities across the organization are more prevalent than the differences despite the obvious national institutional and cultural variants. In addition to the similar work assignments, clientele and physical components existing in the different locations, interviews conducted with the top company management revealed certain corresponding management attitudes and styles. The second part of this chapter will contemplate how the managerial styles reflect the supervision needs and successes of the organization in relation to the nature of the work.

4.5 Management approach

As mentioned previously, high-level managers were interviewed at all of the company headquarter locations. These preliminary interviews were intended to gain an overview of each country subsidiary's operations. Using a semi-structured, conversational interview approach, the researcher learned how top managers viewed their workers and the management style utilized within the various locations.

From these interviews, the researcher ascertained that the treatment of operations workers was rooted in a calculated level of autonomy. The nature of the work and the job site configuration necessitates a certain degree of worker freedom. While there is definitely a management hierarchy and chain of command, workers are left to their own devices while on the job. Supervision is results-driven, with efficiency and safety also being primary considerations.

The CEOs and Operations Managers appeared most concerned with two facets on the job: 1) that workers were following company guidelines relating to installation procedures so that jobs are done correctly and 2) that safety protocols were being followed to avoid injury or property losses on work sites. Although teams are largely unsupervised on worksites, if a team is not fulfilling their duties in what management deems to be an appropriate time allotment or if the quality of the work is substandard this could warrant management intervention. Similarly, malfeasance or complaints relating to infighting within a work team would require managerial involvement. Although all of the upper management interviewed had spent time on the work site to learn the operations, only the depot managers had a significant presence on work sites.

According to the Operations manager in Chicago, visits to work sites were only to see how the job was progressing and not to control worker behavior. This would enable the manager to know whether a team would be able to complete the task that day or whether additional time would need to be scheduled. From the manager's perspective, these were not performance "checkups" put in place to surprise workers but were planned and expected. Team leaders were given

notice that a manager was on his way to the job site. While conscious of the manager's presence, the workers did not seem to view it as someone looking over their shoulder, but rather just a process to get the jobs set up for the day or longer if needed.

4.5.1 Management control

In his article comparing responsible autonomy and direct control, Friedman (1977) discussed the use of different levels of control in the labour process (Friedman, 1977).⁴ He theorised that on the one hand, upper management remains in control of the process by initiating changes in work arrangements and exercising ultimate authority over the work activity of their employees. On the other hand, workers retain control by using their own judgment and exercising their will “over such things as their work pace, the particular tasks they do and the order in which they do that work” (Friedman, 1977:45-6; *see also* Hobson, 1991).

Friedman argued that allowing workers a degree of responsible autonomy would permit workers or groups of workers a wide measure of discretion over the direction of their work tasks. Additionally, responsible autonomy seeks to get workers “to identify with the competitive aims of the enterprise so that they will act responsibly with a minimum of supervision” (Friedman, 1977:48). This is in

⁴ David Montgomery (1987) described the historical roots of the practical autonomy concept, which he referred to as “functional autonomy”. He discussed how skilled craftsman exercised collective control over the work process and the human relations involved in the performance of those tasks. “These same workers stamped their own distinctive mark on the character of the labor movement of the age” (Montgomery, 1987:13).

sharp contrast to the strategy of direct control which instead seeks to limit the scope of worker influence through the use of “coercive threats, close supervision and minimized individual worker responsibility” (Friedman, 1977:49).

Other researchers have called this type relaxed supervision “practical autonomy” (Wardell, 1992) and “functional autonomy” (Montgomery, 1977). This idea of management that encourages controlled autonomy was referenced in several dirty worker studies mentioned in Chapter 2. The views expressed by the home health care workers in Stacey’s (2005) study and the custodial workers in Hood’s (1988) research indicate that the autonomy inherent in the job and permitted by management enhances job satisfaction, as well as promotes greater productivity and efficiency.

On the subject of management-orchestrated autonomy, the United States CEO at the research company stated, “we give the workers a certain level of independence and a sense of responsibility. When you give a van and equipment to people with limited education and no proven background, it’s a leap of faith and they know it”.

He followed up this statement by acknowledging that there had been a few incidents that challenged the use of practical autonomy. He shared an incident that had occurred a few years previous, involving a gasoline credit card that was occasionally issued to work teams to fill up the tank of their work vans when away from the depot. He described how it came to light that one work team was

using the gas credit card to fill up their personal vehicles during the day. Upon learning of the behavior, those individuals were terminated.

However, the CEO believed that this was an isolated incident and that it did not reflect the integrity and work ethic of his workforce in general. He asserted that, “obviously there are going to be a few bad apples occasionally, but I would not change the way I treat my workers because of a few dishonest individuals”. With slightly tighter oversight relating to the credit cards, the work teams vans were still being issued the cards at the time of the interview.

The CEOs and upper level operations managers appeared to realize that their best employees were those who excelled with limited supervision. The operations manager in Bradford, UK, articulated that while his workers respected his authority and knew he ran “a tight ship”, he had an extreme amount of trust in his workers. He stated that upper management sets very strict regulations relating to uniform, process and safety, however, workers are not closely monitored on job sites. If they do not perform up to the expected standards, they will be talked to by the team leader or depot manager which usually rectifies the problem.

In general, the management acknowledged that the nature of the business called for a certain level of autonomy. The CEO in Borehamwood, UK commented that his managerial team had to trust the operations work teams to a certain degree because the job sites were distributed across a wide geographic area. There was no way for the operations director or depot manager to be on all sites all the time.

One way that this trust is cultivated is by schooling the workers on competitive goals of the company, (in line with the arguments of Friedman, 1977). Workers sometimes encounter clients visiting the work sites. Accordingly, the operations workers are at times the face of the company on the job site. Because of the direct client contact, workers are given financial incentives for bringing in business leads or increasing the work order on an existing job. A few workers have even offered jobs in the sales force of the company because they showed exceptional promise in this area.

4.5.2 Management discipline and leniency

During the managerial interviews at the research company, there was little discussion about discipline problems. In most cases, the company allowed for two written warnings before termination. Also the operations managers would sometimes speak to individual workers when problems arose. Attendance and punctuality were the main focus of the limited discussion of disciplinary needs and they shared a few anecdotes about employee tardiness and theft on the job.

In general, the CEOs appeared rather insulated from disciplinary functions. The team leader position is viewed as the first line of discipline if behavior or performance problems arise. If there are repeated incidents of undesirable behavior following a warning or the conduct is exceptionally egregious, the operations manager becomes involved. The managers interviewed seemed more concerned with the challenges the workers faced, rather than the problems management had when dealing with worker behavior.

In 1954, Alvin Gouldner published research describing the management styles and administrative changes within a mining organization. He proposed the concept of the “Indulgency Pattern”. This is a connected set of “concrete judgments and underlying sentiments” disposing workers to react to their job and employer favorably (Gouldner, 1954:56). Within this theory, he outlined management control, perceived leniency and how these management traits affected job satisfaction (Gouldner, 1954:53).

Gouldner observed that workers did not construe leniency to be a management action that gives them something that is already rightfully theirs. Instead, leniency was perceived by the workers when management gave them something that was gratuitous and for which no obligation existed (Gouldner, 1954:53). The miners in Gouldner’s book considered the manager’s absence on the work floor, being permissive of tardiness and absences, soft disciplinary responses to severe rule infractions, and allowing workers to take home gypsum from the mine to sell, as examples of management leniency (Gouldner, 1954: 54).

Within the context of the current study, the management style produces loose, hands-off supervision. However, there did not appear to be a lax, overly indulgent environment. Instead, management interviews indicated high expectations for workers with daily assignments requiring a full, demanding day of work. The depot warehouses, vans and equipment are expected to be clean, well-organized and treated with respect. When employees exceed these expectations, management has the capacity to reward workers with operations-level advancements to team leader and depot manager.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the geographic structure of the research company and the type of services it offers. The daily duties of the operation-level workers have been discussed in detail due to the work's strong relevancy to the research topic. The workers are sent out in relatively self-sufficient four person teams with worksite assignments. While on the job, the teams are given a controlled amount of independence to complete the work.

The chapter also considered the company management style and the effects of the considerable autonomy granted to workers as they carry out their activities. Although being results-driven, the workers in the current study are permitted to create and manage their work environment within certain constraints. The next chapter will introduce the research framework and the data collection strategies utilized for this study.

Chapter 5 - Research framework and methodology to explore dirty workers' intention to stay

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5.1 Introduction

Chapters 2 and 3 provided an understanding of the nature of dirty work and an overview of employee turnover literature. Drawing on the previous review of dirty work and employer turnover literature, the aim of this chapter is to examine the research design and methodology adopted in this thesis. The first section, 5.2 outlines the philosophy that underpins the approach taken with the research. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 will consider the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches. Section 5.5 considers philosophical issues with using a mixed methodology, as well as the rationale for using a mixed methods approach for this study.

Following the consideration of the various data gathering methods, Section 5.6 outlines the conceptual model employed to explore dirty work and intention to stay. This section will also provide the hypothesized relationships underlying the study. Section 5.6 will look at the research procedure used for this quantitative phase of the study and Section 5.7 discusses the qualitative methods used to gather additional insights into worker experiences. This includes consideration of ethnographic elements of the study which incorporated passive participant observation and semi structured interviews. The final section provides a summary of the chapter.

5.2 Research philosophy

Underpinning the methodology is a philosophical stance in relation to the purpose and place of the particular study. A distinction that is frequently made

regarding research philosophies is between positivism and interpretivism (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Both positivist and interpretive researchers hold that human behavior may be patterned and regular. However, while positivists see this in terms of the laws of cause and effect, interpretivists view such patterns as being created out of evolving meaning systems that people generate as they socially interact (Neuman, 2003). A central precept of positivism is that researchers can take a “scientific” perspective when observing social behavior which creates the possibility for objective analysis (Travers, 2001). Bryman and Bell (2007) caution against assuming positivism and science are synonymous concepts, noting that there are dissimilarities between a positivist philosophy and a scientific approach.

Nonetheless, research based on a positivist philosophy tends to be based on deductive theory, where a number of propositions are generated for testing, with empirical verification then sought (Babbie, 2005). Inherent in this overall approach to research is the view that it is possible to measure social behavior independent of context and that social phenomena are ‘things’ that can be viewed objectively (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997).

In contrast, interpretivists take the view that: the subject matter of the social sciences (i.e. people and their institutions) is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure (Bryman & Bell, 2007:

17). This different logic within an interpretivist stance might prompt a researcher to use inductive theory construction, reversing the deductive process by using data to generate theory. Researchers would observe aspects of the social world and seek to discover patterns that could be used to explain wider principles (Babbie, 2005).

In addition, it is seen that there is no one reality, but rather, reality is based on an individual's perceptions and experiences (Robson, 2002). Another weakness of a purely positivistic approach in social research is that facets of the real world that are distinctly human are lost when they are analyzed and "reduced to the interaction of variables" (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997: 102). For this reason the role of the researcher should be to analyze the various interpretations that actors related to a particular phenomenon give to their experiences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

Having discussed some of the basic philosophical assumptions of the two paradigms, it is possible to look at reasons for combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study. Qualitative research tends to be inductive and hypothesis-generating so it helps the researcher make educated guesses about how or why a process happens. Alternatively, quantitative research tends to be deductive and hypothesis-testing so it can help to determine how true such an educated guess is across a population.

Mixed method research has its roots not in positivism or constructivism, but in pragmatism. For more than a century, the advocates of quantitative and qualitative research paradigms have engaged in a philosophical debate regarding the merits of each method. From these discussions, “purists” have emerged on both sides. Quantitative purists contend that the observer is separate from the entities they observe. Generally, proponents of quantitative methods argue that social science inquiry should be objective, emotionally detached and free of bias (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2010: 14).

In contrast, qualitative purists assert that research is value-bound and that subjects can only be studied with a familiar, empathic style that includes emotional interaction between researcher and subject. Both forms of purists agree that quantitative and qualitative research paradigms cannot and should not be intermingled (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2010: 14).

In the middle ground of the methodological spectrum are “situationalists” who maintain that both methods have value. However, they believe that certain research questions lend themselves more to quantitative approaches, whereas other research questions are more suitable for qualitative methods (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005: 376). While recognizing the merits of both quantitative and qualitative research, situationalists do not condone mixing the two methods.

At the opposite end of continuum are the “pragmatists” who advocate integrating both methods within a single study (Creswell, 1995). Sieber (1973) argued that researchers should employ the strengths of both techniques to better grasp social

phenomena because both quantitative and qualitative approaches have inherent strengths and weaknesses (Sieber, 1973). “Pragmatists ascribe to the philosophy that the research question should drive the method(s) used” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005: 377).

Researchers have been conducting mixed methods research for several decades, referring to it by such names as multi-method, integrated, hybrid, combined, and mixed methodology research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 6; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). However, the pragmatic mixed method approach has emerged in the last decade as a research movement with a distinct identity. The term mixed methods research is used to describe all procedures collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in the context of a single study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). This form of research design has evolved to the point where it is increasingly articulated, attached to research practice and recognized as the third major research approach or research paradigm (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007: 112).

Bearing these perspectives in mind, the researcher weighed which method best suited the research objectives of the current study. Ultimately, a mixed methodology was selected. The strengths and weaknesses of each approach will be discussed, as well as the basis for choosing the methods used in this study. Additionally, the chapter will delineate the process for conducting both written questionnaires and semi-structured, on-site interviews.

5.3 Quantitative research

Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of numerical data using mathematically based methods (Creswell, 1994; Smith, 1988). The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically. The main concerns of the quantitative paradigm are that measurement is reliable, valid, and generalizable in its clear prediction of cause and effect (Cassell & Symon, 1994).

5.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of quantitative research

Quantitative data can be measured, more or less accurately, because it contains some form of magnitude, usually expressed in numbers (Patten, 1997:21). Quantitative research facilitates viewing the research problem in very specific and set terms (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992) which often brings about more objective conclusions, allows for more precise hypothesis testing and yields a greater likelihood of determining causality. Quantitative methodology also allows for longitudinal measures of subsequent performance of research subjects.

Quantitative research is typically more practical when potential subjects are not available for extensive interactions or observation. Additionally, time and funds might be considerations that would steer a researcher toward a quantitative method of data collection. Quantitative research can often provide a quick, inexpensive snapshot of a narrow aspect of a problem. However, it should be

noted that a large scale quantitative survey can also be both costly and time consuming.

The quantitative method also may fail to provide the researcher with information on the context of the studied phenomenon. Quantitative studies typically restrict the outcomes of the study to those outlined in the original research proposal due to closed type questions and the structured format. The inherent lack of layers and context provided in quantitative research often thwarts possible evolution or deeper inquiry into the research phenomenon (Axxin & Pearce, 2006; Sieber, 1973).

5.4 Qualitative research

The qualitative paradigm is based on interpretivism (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Kuzel & Like, 1991; Secker et al., 1995) and constructivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The emphasis of qualitative research is on process and meanings.

Techniques used in qualitative studies include individual and focus group interviews and observation. Samples are not meant to represent large populations. Rather, small, purposeful samples of respondents are used because they can provide important information, not because they are representative of a larger group (Reid, 1996).

Qualitative research is often depicted as “a research strategy whose emphasis on a relatively open-ended approach to the research process frequently produces surprises, changes of direction and new insights” (Bryman, 2006). Qualitative data cannot be accurately measured and counted, and are generally expressed in words rather than numbers. This kind of data is descriptive in character. This does not mean that they are any less valuable than quantitative data; in fact, their richness and subtlety lead to great insights into human experiences. Qualitative research depends on careful definition of the meaning of words, the development of concepts and variables, and the plotting of interrelationships between these (Walliman, 2010: 72).

Essentially human activities and attributes such as ideas, customs, mores, and beliefs that are investigated in the study of human beings and their societies and cultures cannot be pinned down and measured in any exact way. Further, when the subjects belong to a closed culture or possess information that is sensitive or confidential, a skilled qualitative researcher who is willing to spend the time breaking through the barriers would likely be more successful than one employing a quantitative approach (Patten, 1997: 21).

Qualitative research in general is more likely to take place in a natural setting (Denzin, 1971; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This means that topics for study focus on everyday activity as "defined, enacted, smoothed, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines" (Van Maanen, 1983: 255). It is less driven by very specific hypotheses and categorical frameworks

and more concerned with emergent themes and idiographic descriptions (Cassell & Symon, 1994).

5.4.1 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research

Qualitative research enables more in-depth and complex aspects of a person's experience to be studied. The qualitative approach is based on the idea of striving to understand social processes in context, while exploring the meanings of social events for those who are involved in them (Esterberg, 2002). Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world—studying things in their natural settings while attempting to make sense of and interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

This form of research often provides a holistic view of the phenomena under investigation (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Patton, 1980). Qualitative inquiry also places fewer restrictions on the ways to perform data collection, subsequent analysis, and interpretation of collected information. This enables the researcher to obtain a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research.

There is “flexibility for respondents to provide data in their own words and in their own style, and researchers can interact with the research subjects in their own language and on their own terms” (Kirk & Miller, 1986). The parameters with qualitative research are more elastic and open to modification. The qualitative method also recognizes that not everything can be quantified, and fewer assumptions are in place at the onset of the study, which allows greater

latitude for exploratory research and generating additional hypotheses. This creates a more realistic view of the world that cannot be obtained with the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research.

From a negative viewpoint, it can be harder to ascertain the validity and reliability of qualitative data (Miles, 1979). Researcher bias can leave the data more open to subjectivity when it is analyzed. Although this is not ideal, it does not mean that the data is necessarily unreliable, it is just a more difficult process to assure the validity of the information provided (Lee, 1999).

On a practical level, some qualitative studies produce too much data. Open-ended questioning can create a large response which takes a lot of time and effort to evaluate properly. On the issue of time management, transcription of recorded interviews often requires significant time and resources. There is also the potential interference of the researcher's personal characteristics and the inability to establish causality.

5.4.2 Ethnographic fieldwork

Ethnography is a qualitative style of research that studies people in naturally occurring settings (Patton, 1980). Ethnography is a collection of methods that allow for the observation of social practices and interactions. These qualitative methods enable the researcher to interpret and build theories about how and why a social process occurs.

They are particularly useful for elucidating the steps of processes that have not been well understood, and to create rich descriptions of people's experiences. Ethnography's unique contribution to qualitative methods is that it deeply examines the context in which activities occur, usually involving work by the researcher with participants as they go about their daily lives. Here, the researcher spends a substantial amount of time and energy interacting within organizational or work settings (Lee, 1999: 89).

In ethnography, fieldwork is mainly associated with the technique of participant observation. "Interviewing is either a complement of participant observation or a major facet of it" (Sperschneider & Bagger, 2003). Wolcott (1999) described participant observation in fieldwork as a way to "hang around, talk to folks, and try to get a sense of what's going on".

Much of the prior research on dirty workers has been accomplished through qualitative ethnographic research involving participant observation. For example, in Haas' (1977) study of high steel ironworkers, the researcher worked alongside the miners for a year. With this ethnographic approach, the researcher gathered data through conversations and close daily contact with his research subjects. More importantly, he experienced the dangerous dirty work environment first hand by performing the work himself. This type of closeness to the subject matter would inevitably lead to decreased objectivity, but it did help provide a rich, contextual portrayal of the work conditions (Haas, 1977).

Similarly, for Ronai's (1989) study of exotic dancers, the researcher took a job as a dancer at a strip club to understand the mentality associated with the work and to insinuate herself into the situation to gain more candid communication with other exotic dancers (Ronai, 1989). Working as a dancer herself allowed the researcher to appreciate and understand the coping mechanisms associated with the moral and physical taint ensconced in the work of an exotic dancer.

Whether observing from afar or finding a participant-observer role in the setting, some contexts may present dangers. Street ethnography is a term that describes research settings "which can be dangerous, either physically or emotionally, such as working with police, drug users, cults, and situations in which political or social tensions may erupt into violence" (Weppner, 1977). The on-site observation required for this dirty worker study could certainly be classified as this form of ethnography due to the observation taking place in rundown, high-crime neighborhoods.

5.4.2.1 Qualitative interviewing

An unstructured or semi-structured interview is less standardized and more flexible than surveying respondents (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009: 478). Qualitative interviews are typically more conversational than a formal discussion with predetermined response categories.

When conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer prepares an 'outline' of the topics to be covered during the course of the conversation. The order in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the questions

are left to the interviewer's discretion. This style of interviewing gives the interviewer the freedom to ask for clarification if the answer is not clear, to prompt the respondent to elucidate further if necessary, and to establish his own style of conversation (Corbetta, 2003: 270).

The lack of structure permits the interviewer to react and revise the course of a conversation to discover issues that had not been considered prior to the interview (Axxin & Pearce, 2006: 5). Interviews have particular strengths such as the potential to yield in-depth, relevant data in a timely manner. Interviews also allow for immediate follow-up and clarification (Marshall & Rossman, 2010: 145). "The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms" (Patton, 1990: 290).

Data collection through interviews does have limitations. Interviews involve personal interaction, and the process requires interviewees to be cooperative and forthcoming. Unfortunately, interviewees can be unwilling or uncomfortable revealing all the interviewer hopes to explore. Due to the lack of anonymity inherent with a face-to-face interview, interviewees may be hesitant to provide truthful responses (Jackson, 2009: 93).

Interviewing is time consuming, but is especially useful because of its flexibility (Guthrie, 2010: 118). Interviews can take many different forms and allow in-depth follow-up questions. They are useful for all ages and socio-economic groups, and also, for those with language difficulties. They are often used to find

out attitudes and perceptions, but they can be a source of factual information as well.

5.4.2.2 Observation

Fieldwork observation separates into two categories: non-participant and participant. In the case of non-participant observation, the researcher is never directly involved in the actions of the actors, but observes them from outside the actors' visual horizon (O'Reilly, 2009).

Researcher participant observation within an ethnographic setting ranges between four levels of involvement (Gold, 1958; Lee, 1999). At one end of the spectrum, the researcher can be the "complete observer". He or she remains in the background and passively observes what others say and do and notes the context in which those actions occur. At the other end of the continuum, the researcher can be the "complete participant". Here, she or he becomes a full but *covert* organizational member. A complete participant hides his or her scientific intentions and field note taking.

Between these two ends, the researcher might be the "participant-observer," who becomes a full organizational member and overtly conducts his or her scientific data-gathering role (Lee, 1999). Also between the two ends, the researcher might be the "observer-participant," who participates as a non-member in organizational activities and overtly conducts her or his scientific data gathering functions (Lee, 1999: 89-99; Lee, Mitchell, & Sablinski, 1999). Immersion in

the setting permits the researcher to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do (Patton, 1980).

Data collection through observation entails the recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Observation is a fundamental method for qualitative inquiry with the “potential to yield unique sources of insight and introspection” (Axxin & Pearce, 2006: 8).

Research through observation can present certain challenges. The presence of the researcher may distort the natural focus of the actions of the study participants. Because observation requires direct contact with the participants, observation methods are time consuming, which makes it a difficult approach to carry out on a large study population (Angrosino, 2007).

5.5 Mixed methods approach

In 1973, Sieber argued that researchers should “integrate” fieldwork and survey methods because of their complementary strengths and weaknesses. This integration, he argued, “could lead to a new style of research in which the two methods ceased to be viewed as epistemologically incompatible and in which researchers no longer felt compelled to choose sides” (Sieber, 1973; *see also* Bryman, 1988; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

To a mixed methods researcher, the method is not as important as the type of research question that is asked (Creswell, 2003). Mixed methods researchers do not subscribe to any one philosophy; thus, they can use assumptions from both quantitative and qualitative paradigms as the research question deems appropriate. In addition, while quantitative and qualitative approaches may have their own limitations separately, mixed methods researchers feel that those limitations can be lessened by choosing methods that complement each other (Hammond, 2005).

5.5.1 Advantages and disadvantages of mixed methods research

Advocates of the mixed research method cite two prominent reasons: 1) to confirm or 2) to complement data obtained through another method. Combining data obtained with both qualitative and quantitative methods offers researchers the chance to verify the findings derived from one type of data with those derived from another (Patton, 1999). Reliability and completeness of data can be made by consulting a variety of sources of data relating to the same event (Walliman, 2010:72). The approach of collecting different kinds of data to measure the same phenomenon is sometimes referred to as “triangulation”. If similar findings come from different sources, the findings have greater credibility (Guthrie, 2010: 42).

Others have argued that the greatest value in combining types of data lies in the ability of one type to compensate for or “complement” the weaknesses of the other (Brewer & Hunter 2006). Using mixed methods hopefully offsets the weaknesses of either approach alone (Bryman, 2006:106). Researchers have

used complementary designs to gain the most complete picture possible of the research issue by exploiting the strengths of each method.

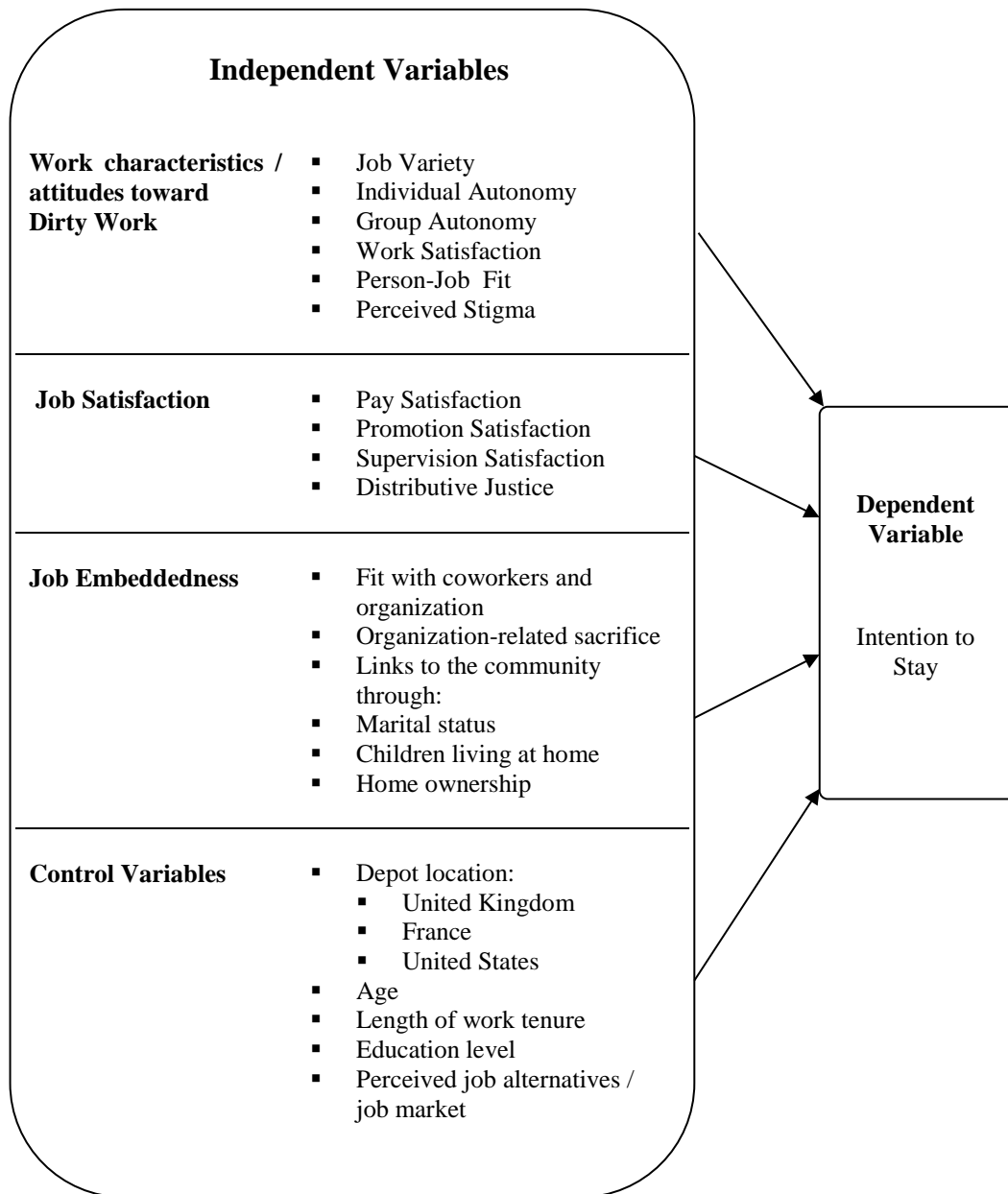
Despite its value, conducting mixed methods research takes time and resources to collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. It adds complexity to the research process and requires clear presentation if the reader is going to be able to distinguish the different procedures. Still, the value of mixed methods research seems to outweigh the potential difficulties associated with this approach. Quantitative data and qualitative data used together can be very powerful. The survey identifies the extent of the problem and interviews and observation can be used to elaborate on the detail and the “story” within the research (Patton, 2002). When a research problem calls for the combination of high levels of structure to test hypotheses and low levels of structure to discover new hypothesis, mixed methods are particularly appropriate (Axinn & Pearce, 2006: 24).

5.6 Research framework

The purpose of including a quantitative component within this study was to further define the relationships between specific variables of interest and dirty workers intention to stay (see Figure 2). Although the comprehensive survey instrument gathered data relating to an assortment of variables, the basis of this study concentrates on three primary areas: work characteristics / employee attitudes toward dirty work, satisfaction with the job and the extent to which the employee is embedded in the job.

The researcher hypothesized that there would be an association between those independent variables and the workers' intention to remain in their jobs at the company. Figure 2 illustrates the hypothesized relationship between the variables.

Figure 2: Research model



5.6.1 Research model variables

The predictor variables which have been associated with employee turnover were considered specifically within the context of dirty workers when developing the research model. Based on previous studies, the research consolidated the

predictors into three distinct areas. The first category was work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work with a basis in studies by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), Ghidina (1992), Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006), and Hughes (1951, 1958).

The second area looks at satisfaction with work based on the research of Griffeth et al. (2000), Maertz and Campion (1998) and Price and Mueller (1981). The third grouping contains constructs relating to job embeddedness which has its chief foundations from the work of Mitchell et al. (2001). The components of each subgroup are listed in Figure 2 and the descriptive results are outlined in Table 4.

5.6.2 Control variables

In addition to controlling for the research country locations, certain demographic variables (age, tenure, education levels, and perceived job market) were included in the model.⁵ Meta-analytic research by Griffeth et al. (2000) indicated that company tenure is negatively related to turnover. Other studies have shown that individual differences such as age, education levels and organizational tenure (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986; Griffeth et al., 2000) can account for significant variance in employee turnover. Additionally, perception of alternative job opportunities has been found to positively predict turnover intentions (Kirschenbaum &

⁵ The sample was overwhelmingly male with only 2 female respondents (.08%) so gender was not included as a control variable.

Weisberg, 2002; Mobley et al., 1979). Based on the past literature, these controls were included in the study.

Based on the research model, 11 predicted relationships were hypothesized. They are stated below:

H₁: Job variety will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₂: Perceptions of individual autonomy will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₃: Perceptions of group autonomy will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₄: Satisfaction with work will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₅: Person–job fit will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₆: Perceived job stigma will be negatively associated with intention to stay.

H₇: Satisfaction with pay, promotion and supervision will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₈: Perceptions of distributive justice will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₉: Dirty workers who are embedded in their workplace due to fit with coworkers and organization will have a greater intention to stay.

H₁₀: Dirty workers who are embedded in their workplace due to the sacrifices if they left their job will have a greater intention to stay.

H₁₁: Dirty workers who are embedded in their workplace due to links to the community will have a greater intention to stay.

Each of these hypotheses will be discussed further in the quantitative results chapter (Chapter 6) and the integrated discussion chapter (Chapter 8).

5.7 Research procedure

Given the study's primary research question and the subject matter being studied, a mixed-methodology was deemed to be the best avenue to collect the most comprehensive and provocative data. This strategy was selected to be both flexible and wide-ranging. In contrast to the large array of preceding qualitative-based dirty work studies (e.g. bike messengers, loggers, police officers, morticians, garbage handlers, sewer workers) the current study utilized a mixed-methodology. This approach included: an administered survey and a series of semi-structured interviews combined with worksite observation. The qualitative data not only assisted with the preparation of the questionnaire, but it also complemented the quantitative data by adding depth and personal perspective to the data. This study focused on one dirty work organization.

To begin the study, the researcher visited each country's headquarters, as well as six depot locations in the United Kingdom, France and the United States. During these introductory visits, the researcher conducted semi-structured preliminary interviews with employees at all levels of the corporate structure. Those interviewed included: a member of the holding company's Board of Directors and each country's Chief Executive Officer. The researcher interviewed the

Director of Operations in each country, the National and Regional Operations Managers and an assortment of Depot Managers, Team leaders and Fitter-level employees.

Using the information gained during the preliminary interviews, the researcher designed a questionnaire which was then administered to all operations workers. The second data collection phase involved semi-structured interviews and document review. The researcher followed up the questionnaire administration with subsequent visits to conduct semi-structured interviews consisting of standard questions exploring general perspectives of the respondents' work situations.

The next section will first address the procedure for collecting the quantitative data. Subsequently, the qualitative process will be discussed.

5.7.1 Research sample – quantitative phase

The research sample for the survey consisted of 484 operations-level workers who would have occasion to visit and perform duties at dirty or dangerous work sites thereby falling under commonly held definition of a “dirty worker” (Hughes, 1971; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

5.7.2 Questionnaire design

Surveys are the primary method of quantitative inquiry. This form of data collection allows many questions to be asked about a given topic, giving increased analytical flexibility. Additionally, the use of surveys allows the researcher to gather information from a very large number of respondents (Axinn & Pearce, 2006: 4). This is generally considered a positive aspect of surveys, because inferences based on large representative samples are known to be more reliable than those formulated based on small or non-representative samples (Kish, 1965).

Written questionnaires can provide insight into individual perceptions and attitudes as well as organizational policies and practices (Kraut, 1996). However, developing a questionnaire is a complex and sophisticated process. Additionally, because of the frequency of their use in all contexts in the modern world, a low response rate is often an issue. The number of responses can be improved if the researcher is present when the subjects complete the questionnaires and the completed questionnaires are returned on the spot. Unfortunately, this approach may limit sample size and dictate the length of the questionnaire as well as the types of questions that can be asked. The researcher's presence can have a negative impact on the candidness of responses due to fears regarding actual confidentiality.

A researcher's ideas about what and how a concept is to be measured must be concrete before a survey begins to produce a competent questionnaire. The discovery of new research questions or new approaches to measurement is

limited and to the extent that it does occur, revised measurement often must wait until the next survey or a different project (Axxin & Pearce, 2006: 4). In the absence of a tested research instrument, the researcher must proceed with item and tool construction. Each item must be carefully worded and easily understood by the reader. The researcher also must be sensitive to factors such as gender, culture, sequence (i.e., usually general to specific), and language. If the right question is not asked, the desired answers will not be obtained.

The key feature of surveys is standardization. A fundamental question regarding instrumentation is whether to use a standardized and/or existing tool or create a customized survey instrument. The use of standardized, well-tested instruments ensures reliability within the survey structure. However, standardized questionnaires because of their applicability to a wider range of settings, might be less likely to pinpoint the specific issues required to adequately address the research question (Church & Waclawski, 1998: 38).

5.7.3 The Substance of the questionnaire

To gain a full picture of the employee's work attitudes, the questionnaire incorporated a diverse selection of 34 scales made up of 113 questions.⁶ The majority of the items in the questionnaire were closed-ended questions and were measured using a five-point Likert type scale (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly

⁶ 13 of the 34 survey scales were utilized for this study.

disagree) (Likert, 1932). The questionnaire included a short section of open-ended questions used to elicit demographic information.

5.7.4 Instrument translation

Because the research included subjects whose native language is French, the questionnaire was professionally translated into the French language for distribution to the employees in the French depots. In international research, the task of the researcher is further complicated by differences in language, cultural nuances, and lack of specific words to describe certain events or situations (Neelankavil, 2007: 174). In translating questionnaires, one has to be aware of the multiple meanings associated with certain words in some countries. Researchers must be careful that the wording has the intended meaning, is not confusing or embarrassing to the respondent and most importantly accurately addresses the research point being studied (Neelankavil, 2007:175).

The most commonly used translation method is “back translation” (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:332). The two step process of back translation first requires an initial translation by a bilingual individual who is a native speaker of the language into which the questionnaire is being translated (Neelankavil, 2007:174). The second part of technique then requires another bilingual person whose native language is the base language, to translate the newly translated version back into the original language. The second translation checks the technical accuracy of the conversion as well as ensures that the intended “spirit” of the questions had been captured (Neelankavil, 2007: 175). In the current study, the questionnaire instrument, as well as the information page and

informed consent documents attached to the questionnaire, were all back translated.

5.7.5 Questionnaire content

The next several paragraphs reveal the construct areas measured and provide an example of the scale questions posed to the respondents. To gauge job satisfaction, the survey included a selection of questions from Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey (1997). The variables included: pay ("I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do"); promotion ("I am satisfied with my chances for promotion"); supervision ("My supervisor treats me fairly"); and nature of work ("I like doing the things I do at work").

Other areas covered included: Task Variety (Price & Mueller, 1986) ("My job has variety"); Distributive Justice (Price & Mueller, 1986) ("Compared to other employees, my work reward is proper in view of the effort I put into my job"); Individual Autonomy (Breugh, 1985) ("I am able to choose the way to go about my job"); Group Autonomy (Breugh, 1985, adapted by Langfred, 2005) ("My work group is allowed to decide how to go about getting the job done"); Intention To Leave (Cammann et al., 1979; Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire) ("It is very possible that I will look for a new job soon"); Dangerous Work (Jermier, Gaines, & McIntosh, 1989: 17; Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire; Price & Mueller, 1986) ("I encounter potentially hazardous situations while at work"); and Perceived Job Alternatives ("It would

be easy for me to find a job with another employer as good as the one I have now”(Price & Mueller, 1986).

The questionnaire included measures relating to job embeddedness (Mitchell, 2001), specifically assessing Organizational fit (“I like the members of my work group”); and Organization-Related Sacrifice (“I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job”); Person-Job Fit (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001) (“I am the right type of person for this type of work”). The questionnaire also included researcher-created questions concerning attitudes about dirty work and stigmatization. An example of a dirty work question is: (“I often work on job sites that are not clean”). Table 1 describes the construct questions.

Table 1: Scale Questions

<i>VARIABLES</i>	<i>QUESTIONS</i>
<i>Pay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do. • I feel appreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me. • I feel satisfied with my chances for salary increases.
<i>Promotion</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is great opportunity for promotion on my job. • Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted. • I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.
<i>Supervision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like my supervisor. • My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job. • My supervisor is treats me fairly.
<i>Nature of Work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel a sense of pride in doing my job. • I sometimes feel my job is meaningless. • I like doing the things I do at work.
<i>Variety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My job has variety. • I have the opportunity to do a number of different things. • Many of my tasks are the same from day to day.
<i>Distributive justice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared to other employees, my work reward is proper in view of the effort I put into my job. • Compared to other employees, my work reward is proper in view of my work experience. • Compared to other employees, my work reward is proper in view of my work responsibilities.
<i>Individual autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am allowed to decide how to go about getting my job done. • I am able to choose the way to go about my job. • I am free to choose the method(s) to use in carrying out my work
<i>Group autonomy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My work group is allowed to decide how to go about getting the job done. • My work group is free to choose the method(s) to use in carrying out our work.
<i>Job embeddedness</i>	<p><i>Fit</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I like the members of my work group. • My coworkers are similar to me. • I feel like I am a good match for this company.

	<p><i>Sacrifice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel that people at work respect me a great deal. • I would sacrifice a lot if I left this job. • The prospects for continuing to work with this company are excellent.
<i>Person-job fit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My personality is a good match for this job. • I am the right type of person for this type of work.
<i>Perceived job alternatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be easy for me to find a job with another employer as good as the one I have now. • It would be easy for me to find a job with another employer that is better than the one I have now. • It would be easy for me to find a job with another employer that is much better than the one I have now.
<i>Intention to stay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I often think of leaving the organization. • It is very possible that I will look for a new job soon. • If I had it to do over, I would still choose to work for the company.
<i>Dirty work*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I often work on job sites that are not clean. • Many people could not perform the duties that I do as part of my job. • Many people would not want to perform the duties that I do as part of my job. • Many people would not want to work in the areas of the city where much of my job takes place. • Some people would not work in areas that contain a lot of public housing projects.
<i>Stigma</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are not impressed when I tell them what I do for a living.

*The dirty work construct was not included in the model. However, some of the individual questions were utilized for discussion within the thesis.

The questionnaire considered other embeddedness links with the company (Mitchell, 2001) by inquiring about the employees' marital status, children living at home and home ownership.

5.7.6 Cronbach alpha reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which measures are free from random error and therefore yield consistent results (Zikmund, 1997). The scales of the variables were checked for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (Zikmund, 1997). An alpha of 0.70 or above is considered to be reliable as suggested by many researchers (Davis, 1996; Nunnally, 1978). It should also be noted that a high value for Cronbach's alpha indicates good internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Item analysis was performed on the 13 scales to test the effectiveness of individual test items. Following an analysis of the reliability scores, certain questions were removed from analysis to improve the alpha score for the scale. The results of the tests for each scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Cronbach alpha scores

Pay	.826
Promotion	.923
Supervision	.911
Job Satisfaction	.928
Variety	.797
Distributive Justice	.928
Individual Autonomy	.869
Embeddedness- Fit	.668
Embeddedness – Sacrifice	.719
Person-Job Fit – Personality	.903
Job Market	.888
Group Autonomy	.744
Intention to Leave	.811
Stigma / Pride (<i>single item scale</i>)	

5.7.7 Control variables

Five control variables were included in the questionnaire to collect information regarding the respondents' demographic characteristics including: age, tenure, education level, country location and perceived job alternatives. These control variables can be beneficial to assessing whether any patterns appear among certain demographic groups as well those sharing specific personal life traits.

The questions on age and number of children, were open-ended questions to be filled in by the respondents. For education, respondents were asked to describe the highest level of education they had achieved using the following options (some primary school (<12 years), high school graduate (12 years), Associates degree (15 years), college degree (17 years), or Master's degree (18 years). The perceived job alternatives variable was tested using a three item scale requiring Likert style responses (Likert, 1932).

5.7.8 Survey administration

Questionnaires were delivered to all country headquarter locations. The survey documents were then distributed to the operations-level employees. Respondent inclusion was limited to those staff members who would have occasion to visit and perform duties at dangerous or dirty work sites, thereby conforming to the definition of a "dirty worker". The depots allocated a break during working hours for employees to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires were returned in individual sealed envelopes to the researcher.

A total of 484 surveys were distributed during site visits to the headquarters. 266 usable surveys were returned, for a total response rate of 56 percent. In the United Kingdom, a total of 317 surveys were disseminated. Of those given to employees, 161 (51 percent) were returned. In France, 60 questionnaires were distributed and 33 (55 percent) were completed. In the United States, of the 107 questionnaires dispensed 78 (73 percent) were returned.

5.7.9 Fieldwork interviews

In total, 53 semi-structured interviews were conducted at corporate headquarters, depot locations and at work sites. The researcher initially conducted interviews with the Chief Executive Officer, Director of Operations, and Human Resource personnel as well as a few operations level workers at each country location headquarters. These discussions helped to gain an overall perspective on the company structure and management style.

Following the questionnaire administration and quantitative data collection, the researcher returned to several depot locations for additional observation and further interviews. During these later visits to depot warehouses and job sites, interviews were conducted with operations level workers only. The employees were asked about how they had come to work at the company, what type of work they did before coming to the research company, the nature of their work, any feelings they had about working in dirty and potentially dangerous conditions and their future work aspirations. The researcher collected notes that included employee observations about their work environment and the company practices.

5.7.10 Research sample – qualitative phase

The structure of the fieldwork visits necessitated a convenience sampling approach for the worker interviews. Participant availability and time constraints on job sites dictated the sample to some degree for this aspect of the study. If workers were busy, they either could not be interviewed or the discussions were brief. Furthermore, job site proximity determined which locations could be visited and the teams the researcher would encounter. The key objective when obtaining participants for this part of the study was that they all performed the same type of dirty work for the same organization. According to Bryman and Bell (2003), very often ethnographic researchers are forced to gather information from whatever sources are available to them.

5.7.11 Semi-structured / conversational interviewing

These interactions ranged from 15 to 30 minutes depending on the location. As mentioned above, at work sites, the workers had limited time to spend talking. Many workers continued with their tasks as they answered questions. Some would finish talking to the researcher and walk away to another task only to then return with another thought a few minutes later. Dalton (1959) cited the importance of what he called, ‘conversational interviewing’ as a valid fieldwork data collection strategy. “These are not interviews in the usual sense, but a series of broken and incomplete conversations that, when written up, may be tied together as one statement” (Dalton, 1959:280).

Of the 53 company employees interviewed, 45 of the workers were operations-level personnel who spent time working on dirty jobsites (16 workers in the United Kingdom, 8 workers in France, and 21 workers in the United States).

The researcher gained insight into the dirty and dangerous elements of the employees' work duties through vivid anecdotes disclosed by many of the workers. Table 3 outlines the subject matter of the interviews.

Table 3: Semi-structured interview subject format

<i>Pre-entry information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Previous work ▪ Method used to learn of current position at company
<i>Current position</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time on the job ▪ Promotions received ▪ Working hours
<i>Nature of the work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of job duties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Favorite tasks ▪ Least Favorite tasks ▪ Work environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job site descriptions ▪ Neighborhood locations of job sites ▪ Team structure ▪ Autonomy
<i>Coworkers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relations with coworkers ▪ Socializing on / off the job
<i>Supervision</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attitudes toward immediate supervision ▪ Attitudes toward upper management
<i>General attitudes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Best / worst features of job ▪ Suggested changes to job
<i>Long term goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plans to remain with company ▪ Promotion expectations at company
<i>Dirtiness / Danger</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unpleasant / disgusting aspects of job ▪ Feelings of danger on work site ▪ Specific incidents of disgusting / dangerous situations
<i>Stigma</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opinions of friends / family about job ▪ Feelings of pride in work

5.7.12 Interview content analysis

The notes from each interview / conversation were transcribed. The comments were then reviewed for consistent and prominent themes. Interview texts were grouped according to themes. The key themes are discussed in the qualitative chapter 7.

5.7.13 Observer - participant observation

To supplement the information gained through the interviews and gain more insight into the dirty work setting, the researcher spent approximately 48 hours observing and interacting with employees working at job sites. During these visits, the researcher experienced the crime-ridden geographic areas where the workers do much of their work. Within the actual buildings where the work took place, the researcher was able to observe the filthy environment and physically taxing duties carried out by the workers.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology employed to address the research issues presented in Chapter 1. This chapter discussed the different advantages and disadvantages attached to quantitative, qualitative and a mixed-methodology approach for data collection. This information was useful in deciding which methodological approach would best suit the project at hand.

This chapter also covered the research model and study hypotheses. For data collection, a mixed-methodology was selected because it most optimally captured the data necessary for a full perspective of the issues here. Dirty

workers are a unique subset of the work population. Therefore, it was critical to understand the detailed distinctions in the workers' daily activities. The quantitative approach allowed for the collection of large quantity of data and to make objective determinations relating to the worker responses.

The qualitative data supplements the objective survey information by adding humanistic facets to more adequately explain the worker experiences. Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) submitted that the intent of qualitative research is, through in-depth examination, to illuminate and better understand the rich lives of human beings and the world in which they live (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006).

Ultimately, the quantitative survey information and the qualitative interview and site visit information provided a detailed, thorough depiction of the workers' daily experiences in conjunction with their attitudes toward the work and the organization.

Chapter 6 - Quantitative Findings

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6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 discussed the process undertaken to gather and process the quantitative data for this study. Specifically, the methodology chapter explains the rationale for utilizing a mixed-method approach. This chapter will describe the quantitative results obtained in the study using six sections.

The descriptive statistics of the variables included in the study are covered in Section 6.2. Section 6.3 presents the results for the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), which analyzes the data to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the group means for employees based on their country work location (United Kingdom, France and the United States). Section 6.4 reports the correlations between the variables in the model and Section 6.5 examines the regression results and how they relate to the hypothesized relationships. The final section summarizes these findings, and contributes to the integrated discussion of the study presented in Chapter 8.

6.2 Descriptive statistics

This section presents the characteristics of the study sample as well as the descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures and present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form (Trochim, 1985). The average scores of the variables referred to in this section are all based on a five-point

Likert scale with 5 denoting strongly agree and 1 on the opposite end of the spectrum at strongly disagree (Likert, 1932).

The questionnaires were completed by 266 employees working in different parts of United Kingdom, France and the United States. Of the total sample, 157 respondents work in United Kingdom (59%), 31 respondents work in France (12%) and 78 respondents work in the United States (29%). The data collected was entered into computer and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20.0. Table 4 illustrates the geographic placement of the sample and summarizes the mean and standard deviation values for each of the model variables.

Table 4: Summary statistics of the variables in the model

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>N</i>
1. Intention to Stay	3.58	.89	265
2. Job Variety	3.85	.82	260
3. Individual Autonomy	3.67	.88	261
4. Group Autonomy	3.60	.85	266
5. Work Satisfaction	3.85	.72	266
6. Person-Job Fit	4.11	.68	264
7. Perceived Stigma	2.91	1.09	263
8. Pay Satisfaction	2.79	.89	265
9. Promotion Satisfaction	3.30	1.04	264
10. Supervision Satisfaction	3.99	.83	264
11. Distributive Justice	3.19	.92	260
12. Embeddedness (Fit)	3.84	.61	266
13. Embeddedness (Sacrifice)	3.49	.82	265
14. Marital Status	.29	.45	242
15. Children at home	.52	.50	240
16. Home Ownership	.35	.48	243
17. United Kingdom	.59	.49	266
18. France	.12	.32	266
19. United States	.29	.46	266
20. Age	31.29	8.68	232
21. Tenure (yrs.)	2.65	2.60	226
22. Level of Education (yrs.)	12.60	1.79	217
23. Perceived Job Market	2.85	.85	264

6.2.1 Dependent variable - intention to stay

The worker responses regarding intention to stay with the organization resulted in a mean score of 3.58. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the workers either agreed or strongly agreed that they intended to stay with their organization. A little over 30% of the workers were unsure whether they would continue to work at the company. Only 11% of the workers stated that they did not intend to stay with the organization.

6.2.2 Independent Variables – work characteristics, job satisfaction and job embeddedness

Certain variables accrued comparatively high mean scores. The results suggested that the workers believed their job contained a lot of variety ($\bar{X} = 3.85$) and that they were generally satisfied with their work duties ($\bar{X} = 3.85$). The workers also appeared to be satisfied with the quality of their supervision ($\bar{X} = 3.99$). They also reported a belief that their abilities were a good fit for the demands of the job. This was revealed in both the person-job fit ($\bar{X} = 4.11$) construct and with the embeddedness (fit) ($\bar{X} = 3.84$) variable.

On the other end of the spectrum, the workers' responses indicated that the workers do not feel stigmatized by their work ($\bar{X} = 2.91$). On a practical level, the employee responses indicated a relatively low amount of satisfaction with their pay ($\bar{X} = 2.78$) and with distributive justice ($\bar{X} = 3.19$) in the organization.

The remainder of the variables in the research achieved moderate scores just above the midpoint on the Likert scale. The worker responses did not signify an exceptionally strong view relating to: individual autonomy ($\bar{X} = 3.67$), group autonomy ($\bar{X} = 3.60$), satisfaction with promotion ($\bar{X} = 3.30$), and embeddedness (sacrifice) ($\bar{X} = 3.49$).

6.2.3 Perception of dirtiness

The study survey also included questions to determine whether the workers perceived their daily duties to be dirty. The responses strongly indicated that the workers viewed their work as dirty and that they performed their work in areas where many people would be uncomfortable due to high crime rates. Ninety-one percent (91%) of the workers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I often work on job sites that are not clean”. Further, seventy-eight percent (78%) of the workers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “Many people would not want to work in the areas of the city where much of my job takes place”.

6.2.4 Control variables

The demographic information is listed in Table 4. The mean age was 31.5 years at the time the survey was taken with the youngest age reported as 18 and the oldest being 55 years. Only 29% of the workers reported being married but almost 52% reported having at least one child living at home. Roughly, 35% of the respondents reported owning a home. Seventy percent (70%) had achieved a high school diploma (12 years of schooling completed) and 13% of workers did

not complete high school. Seventeen percent (17%) of workers had attended college.

The mean tenure was 2.65 years. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the workers had worked at the company for less than one year. Forty-seven percent (47%) had been with the company 1-5 years. Approximately, 15% of the respondents had worked with the company 5-10 years. On the issue of alternative job opportunities, the worker responses reflected a pessimistic view of alternative job prospects. The mean score for that variable was a relatively low 2.85.

6.2.5 Summary profile of workers

The descriptive statistics provided an instructive depiction of this group of workers. Most notably, they perceived themselves as “dirty workers”. They acknowledged that their work contains elements of dirt that other people would not be willing to perform and that they often worked in dangerous neighborhoods. Despite the dirt and danger built into their job, the workers did not appear to feel stigmatized by their vocation.

They were also generally satisfied with the duties required by the job and they felt that their work days contained a fair amount of variety. The workers also believed their personality and skills were a good fit for this type of dirty work.

Although the workers appear to generally be satisfied with the work that is required of them, they are dissatisfied with the pay they receive. The workers

also indicated skepticism that better job opportunities were available to them. This lack of confidence that there were alternative job options could have stemmed in part from the relatively low education levels of the workers. Seventy percent (70%) of the workers had only a high school diploma and 13% of the workers did not even complete high school. This lack of higher education, combined with the limited transferable skills obtained in this dirty job, did not necessarily make them highly qualified for better employment opportunities.

6.3 ANOVA tests

As explained in Chapter 5, research was conducted in three country locations. The data reflects the views of workers from the United Kingdom, France and the United States. A one-way ANOVA was used to test for differences among the respondents located in the three countries represented in the sample. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical method used to analyze statistically significant differences between the group means of two or more means (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

This section will assess the mean differences in attitudinal variables between the three country locations. The ANOVA tests looked at the key study variables. The first group compares the mean differences of the variables included in the model. The second group compares the variables that reflect attitudes toward dirty work. The ANOVA test revealed significant mean score differences for the following independent variables in the model and post hoc tests confirmed significant differences for the following variables: group autonomy, work satisfaction,

perceived stigma, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, age and tenure.

For this study, the Scheffé's test was utilized. In the general case when many or all contrasts might be of interest, the Scheffé method tends to give narrower confidence limits and is, therefore the preferred method. The post hoc test gives comparisons of all the categories with one another. Each of the statistically significant variables will be addressed in the following sections.

6.3.1 Group autonomy

There was a significant effect of group autonomy achieved at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,263) = 10.84$, $p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the workers' group autonomy in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.41$, $SD = .85$) was significantly lower than the workers in the United States ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .77$). However, the mean score for the workers' group autonomy in France ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .77$) did not significantly differ from workers in the United Kingdom and the United States.

6.3.2 Work satisfaction

There was a significant effect of work satisfaction achieved at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,263) = 7.22$, $p = .001$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for satisfaction with work in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .73$) was

significantly lower than the workers in the both the United States ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .64$) and France ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .69$). However, the mean score for the workers' satisfaction with work in France did not significantly differ from workers in the United States.

6.3.3 Perceived stigma

There was a significant effect of the perception of stigma achieved at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,260) = 12.25$, $p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for perceived stigma in the France ($M = 2.07$, $SD = .92$) was significantly lower than the workers in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.09$) and the United States ($M = 2.85$, $SD = .98$). However, the mean score for the workers' perception of stigma in United States did not significantly differ from workers in the United Kingdom.

6.3.4 Promotion and supervision satisfaction

There was a significant effect of the promotion satisfaction achieved at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,261) = 17.92$, $p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for workers' promotion satisfaction in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.01$) was significantly lower than the workers in the United States ($M = 3.65$, $SD = .96$) and France ($M = 3.92$, $SD = .81$). However, the mean score for the workers' promotion satisfaction in the France did not significantly differ from workers in the United States.

There was a significant effect of the supervision satisfaction achieved at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,261) = 9.05, p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for workers' supervision satisfaction in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.82, SD = .85$) was significantly lower than the workers in the United States ($M = 4.20, SD = .77$) and France ($M = 4.35, SD = .71$). However, the mean score for the workers' supervision satisfaction in the France did not significantly differ from workers in the United States.

6.3.5 Age

There was a significant effect of age at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,229) = 10.11, p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the workers' age in the United Kingdom ($M = 33.32, SD = 9.10$) was significantly higher than the workers in the United States ($M = 27.91, SD = 7.42$). The mean score for workers in the United Kingdom was almost 6 years older than the workers in the United States. However, the mean score for the workers' age in France ($M = 29.64, SD = 6.47$) did not significantly differ from workers in the United Kingdom and the United States.

6.3.6 Tenure

There was a significant effect of tenure at the $p < .05$ level for the three countries [$F(2,223) = 12.62$, $p = .000$]. Post hoc analyses using the Scheffé post hoc criterion for significance indicated that the mean score for the workers' tenure in the United Kingdom ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 2.73$) was significantly higher than the workers in the United States ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 2.09$) and in France ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 2.07$). However, the mean score for the workers' tenure in France did not significantly differ from workers in the United States.

Table 5: ANOVA Results

	<i>All Workers</i>	<i>UK (59%)</i>	<i>France (12%)</i>	<i>US (29%)</i>	<i>Significant Differences</i>
Intention to stay	3.58	3.52	3.65	3.68	
Work Characteristics					
Job Variety	3.85	3.83	3.73	3.92	
Individual Autonomy	3.67	3.54	3.88	3.84	
Group Autonomy	3.60	3.41	3.79	3.91	** UK < US
Work Satisfaction	3.85	3.72	4.06	4.04	** UK < US, France
Person-Job Fit	4.11	4.11	3.98	4.17	
Perceived Stigma	2.91	3.10	2.07	2.85	** France < UK, US
Job Satisfaction Facets					
Pay Satisfaction	2.78	2.70	3.10	2.84	
Promotion Satisfaction	3.30	3.01	3.92	3.65	** UK < US, France
Supervision Satisfaction	3.99	3.82	4.35	4.20	** UK < US, France
Distributive Justice	3.19	3.07	3.37	3.37	
Job Embeddedness					
Embeddedness (Fit)	3.84	3.87	3.91	3.76	
Embeddedness (Sacrifice)	3.50	3.38	3.64	3.66	
Marital Status	.29	.27	.36	.31	
Dependent Child	.52	.56	.43	.46	
Home Ownership	.35	.41	.25	.26	
Age	31.29	33.32	29.64	27.91	** UK > US
Tenure	2.65	3.35	1.67	1.69	** UK > US, France
Level of Education	12.60	12.49	12.08	12.97	
Job Market Opportunities	2.85	2.76	2.95	2.99	

** Mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

6.3.7 ANOVA results analysis

The ANOVA test revealed significant mean score differences between country location for age, tenure, group autonomy, perceived stigma as well as satisfaction with: work, promotional opportunities and supervision.

The mean score for workers in the United Kingdom was almost 6 years older than the workers in the United States. Workers in the United Kingdom also had nearly double the mean score of years on the job when compared with the other country locations.

Additionally, the company history and structure could contribute to these statistically significant differences between countries in age and tenure. The research company was founded and is currently headquartered in the United Kingdom. Since the UK depots have been in existence for a longer duration, there would inevitably be some workers who had worked for the company longer and be more advanced in age in the United Kingdom depots.

Beyond the control variables, workers in the United Kingdom also had significantly lower reported group autonomy scores than workers in the United States. This could once again be due to the United Kingdom location being in business longer. The parent company, under which the three country locations operate, came into existence through the purchase of another company who performed the same service in the United Kingdom that is currently performed by operations workers at the research company. That previous company had been in operation for several decades before the acquisition. Therefore, the UK

depots had an infrastructure in place long before the American subsidiary location was created. The French operations were created a few years ahead of the United States.

The more developed operations structure and processes could decrease the feeling of group autonomy. Workers in the United States work in smaller, less established depots due to their relative infancy compared to the United Kingdom depots. This could lead to a greater feeling of worker independence because the hierarchical structure (with more layers of lower management) found in the United Kingdom depots has not yet come to fruition in the United States.

The ANOVA results suggest that workers in the United Kingdom are generally less satisfied with their work duties, supervisors and opportunities for promotion than the other two locations. The trend of statistically significant lower mean scores relating to satisfaction variables could be a product of the business origin and corporate headquarter location. The presence of the parent company management could account for tighter operational controls. The results of the ANOVA testing are presented in Table 5.

6.4 Correlations between variables

This section discusses the results of the correlations between the variables in the research model and intention to stay. The analysis refers to zero-order correlations (two-tailed tests). Correlation analysis was utilized to determine

whether the associations between the variables and intention to stay were significant. Table 6 shows correlations between variables.

6.4.1 Strong correlations with intent to stay

A number of the variables in the study displayed a significant correlation with intention to stay. There were strong correlations (greater than .50) between intention to stay and satisfaction with work duties, ($r = .59$, $p < .000$), pay satisfaction ($r = .52$, $p < .000$), distributive justice ($r = .50$, $p < .000$) and embeddedness (sacrifice) ($r = .61$, $p < .000$).

Therefore, the results suggest that workers who are satisfied with their work duties (even if they are dirty or dangerous) are more likely to intend to remain in the job. Additionally, workers who are content with their pay levels and who perceive that rewards are fairly distributed in the workplace are also more likely to intend to stay at the company.

The results also indicate that workers who are conscious of the positive elements of their job that will be lost if they leave are more likely to intend to stay. This concept is encompassed by the embeddedness (sacrifice) variable which showed a strong correlation with intention to stay in the study. According to Mitchell et al. (2001), the more an employee will lose from leaving (e.g., losing social contacts, job privileges and career opportunities), the more difficult it will be to leave the job. The results in this study indicate that those workers who are mindful of the positives connected to their dirty job are more likely to plan to stay.

6.4.2 Medium to low correlations with intent to stay

There were medium to low correlations between intention to stay and the following variables: job variety ($r = .38, p < .000$), individual autonomy ($r = .32, p < .000$), group autonomy, ($r = .38, p < .000$), person-job fit ($r = .34, p < .000$), perceived stigma ($r = -.49, p < .000$), promotion satisfaction ($r = .49, p < .000$), supervision satisfaction ($r = .44, p < .000$) and embeddedness (fit) ($r = .26, p < .000$). The job alternatives / job market variable was the only control variable that demonstrated a significant correlation with intention to stay ($r = -.374, p < .000$).

The results suggest that a dirty worker who feels his job requirements incorporate variety and that he has a certain level of autonomy individually and with his work group will be more apt to plan to stay in the job. Also, the more an employee feels satisfied with his prospects for promotion and his direct supervisor, the more likelihood he will intend to stay.

The results further show a connection with a worker's feeling that his skills and personality are a good match for the dirty job and intention to stay. This concept is embodied in both the person-job fit and the embeddedness (fit) construct.

Both the perception of stigma and alternative job opportunities variables showed a negative correlation with intention to stay. Accordingly, the workers in the study who believe others look unfavorably on this dirty job, the worker may feel shame. To alleviate the indignity felt by this occupational connection to dirt, the worker may seek other employment (*See Wildes, 2005: 225*).

If a worker perceives he has many job options available to him, this can lead to a sense that other, perhaps less dirty work is available. Regardless of whether a person is satisfied or dissatisfied with his work, believing other options are available enhances the expectation that there might be attainable work opportunities that are even slightly better. Conversely, if the workers in this study do not believe that other opportunities are out there, even if they dislike the current dirty job, the correlation analysis suggests that they would report a greater intention to stay (Gerhart, 1990; March & Simon, 1958). A summary of the correlation analysis are reported below in Table 6.

Table 6: Means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations (N=211)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Dependent Variable</i>												
1. Intention to Stay	3.58	.89	1									
<i>Work Characteristics</i>												
2. Job Variety	3.85	.82	.38**	1								
3. Individual Autonomy	3.67	.88	.32**	.37**	1							
4. Group Autonomy	3.60	.85	.38**	.32**	.60**	1						
5. Satisfaction w / work duties	3.85	.72	.59**	.48**	.37**	.34**	1					
6. Person – Job Fit	4.11	.68	.34**	.25**	.24**	.14**	.42**	1				
7. Perception of Stigma	2.91	1.09	-.49**	-.32**	-.41**	-.39**	-.53**	-.23**	1			
<i>Satisfaction with Work</i>												
8. Satisfaction w/ Pay	2.79	.89	.52**	.29**	.27**	.26**	.42**	.13*	-.51**	1		
9. Satisfaction w/ Prom	3.30	1.04	.49**	.35**	.37**	.37**	.47**	.20**	-.50**	.58**	1	
10. Satisfaction w/ Supervision	3.99	.83	.44**	.39**	.30**	.38**	.49**	.18**	-.31**	.34**	.49**	1
11. Distributive Justice	3.19	.92	.50**	.28**	.32**	.32**	.43**	.15*	-.42**	.54**	.56**	.37**
<i>Job Embeddedness</i>												
12. Embedded (Fit)	3.84	.61	.26**	.31**	.33**	.34**	.39**	.39**	-.33**	.20**	.19**	.29**
13. Embedded (Sacrifice)	3.49	.82	.61**	.47**	.39**	.42**	.65**	.37**	-.58**	.56**	.56**	.52**
14. Marital Status	.29	.45	.02	.02	.11	.00	.07	.001	-.04	.03	.02	-.04
15. Dependent Child	.52	.50	.03	.04	.09	.04	-.03	-.04	.02	.06	-.09	-.03
16. Home ownership	.35	.48	-.02	.03	-.01	-.09	-.06	.02	.10	-.04	-.08	-.11
<i>Control Variables</i>												
17. United Kingdom	.59	.49	-.08	-.02	-.17**	-.27**	-.23**	-.01	.21**	-.12	-.34**	-.25**
18. France	.12	.32	.03	-.05	.09	.08	.11	-.07	-.28**	.13*	.21**	.16*
19. United States	.29	.46	.07	.06	.13*	.24**	.17**	.06	-.04	.04	.22**	.16**
20. Age	31.29	8.68	-.05	.07	-.02	-.13*	-.01	.06	.10	-.13	-.15*	-.13
21. Tenure	2.65	2.60	-.11	-.01	-.03	-.19**	-.05	.03	.10	-.03	-.17*	-.21**
22. Level of Education	12.60	1.79	.01	.07	.20**	.11	-.04	.03	.09	-.05	-.01	.06
23. Job Market	2.85	.85	-.37**	-.07	-.07	-.08	-.14*	.00	.17**	-.19**	-.16*	-.11

<i>Variable</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>33</i>
11. Distributive Justice	1												
12. Embedded (Fit)	.19**	1											
13. Embedded (Sacrifice)	.54**	.46**	1										
14. Marital Status	.03	-.07	.05	1									
15. Dependent Child	-.04	-.05	-.01	.25**	1								
16. Home ownership	.01	-.10	-.07	.37**	.19**	1							
17. United Kingdom	-.16**	-.02	-.16**	-.06	.10	.16*	1						
18. France	.07	-.05	.07	.05	-.06	-.08	-.44**	1					
19. United States	.12*	-.09	.13*	.03	-.07	-.12	-.77**	-.23**	1				
20. Age	-.02	-.05	-.04	-.45**	.24*	.43**	.28**	-.07	-.25**	1			
21. Tenure	-.02	.05	-.05	-.34**	.27**	.28**	.32**	-.14*	-.25**	.49**	1		
22. Level of Education	-.06	.04	-.06	-.05	-.07	.05	-.07	-.11	.15*	-.08	-.18**	1	
23. Job Market	-.23**	-.00	-.21**	-.04	-.09	-.06	-.13*	.04	.11	-.05	-.02	.01	1

The diagonal reports the reliabilities

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 (one-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 (one-tailed)

6.5 Hierarchical regression results

A regression analysis was performed to identify the variables that were associated with employee intention to stay. Figure 9 provides an overview of the variables in each group and the order that each group was entered. The main focus in a hierarchical multiple regression is on the change in predictability associated with predictor variables entered later in the analysis over and above that contributed by predictor variables entered earlier in the analysis (Petrocelli, 2003).

The findings will be discussed in four steps. The cut off for significance was $p < .10$, $p < .05$ and $p < .01$. The ANOVA test for the individual models provides the F test and overall significance for each model. In the final stage of the regression analysis, the researcher examined the R-square. The R-square statistic compensates for the number of variables in the model and it will only increase if added variables contribute significantly to the model.

Table 7: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	Change Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.405 ^a	.16	.14	.83	.16	6.46	6	198	.00
2	.715 ^b	.51	.48	.64	.35	22.75	6	192	.00
3	.757 ^c	.57	.54	.61	.06	6.83	4	188	.00
4	.764 ^d	.58	.54	.61	.01	.86	5	183	.51
<p>a. Predictors: (Constant), job market, level of education achieved, age, United Kingdom, France, and tenure.</p> <p>b. Predictors: (Constant), job market, level of education achieved, age, United Kingdom, France, tenure, person-job fit, job variety, group autonomy, individual autonomy, perceived stigma, satisfaction with work duties.</p> <p>c. Predictors: (Constant), job market, level of education achieved, age, United Kingdom, France, tenure, person-job fit, job variety, group autonomy, individual autonomy, perceived stigma, satisfaction with work duties, distributive justice, pay satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, promotion satisfaction.</p> <p>d. Predictors: (Constant), job market, level of education achieved, age, United Kingdom, France, tenure, person-job fit, job variety, group autonomy, individual autonomy, perceived stigma, satisfaction with work duties, distributive justice, pay satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, dependent children, home ownership, marital status, embeddedness (fit), embeddedness (sacrifice).</p>									

Step 1 included the control variables. Step 2 encompassed those variables associated with work characteristics and employee attitudes toward dirty work. Step 3 focused on facets of job satisfaction and the Step 4 was comprised of the variables related to job embeddedness.

6.5.1 Step 1 - Control variables

Part one of the regression analysis included: United Kingdom, France, age, tenure, level of education and job market opportunities as predictor variables. The results indicate that the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 6.46$, $p = .000$) and this first grouping of variables contributed to explained variance

($\Delta R^2 = .16$, $p < 0.01$). The next step was to determine to what extent each variable uniquely predicted intention to stay and did the unique relationships predict in the direction hypothesized.

Of the control variables included in the study, only the job market opportunities predictor showed a statistically significant result in Step 1. The regression coefficient was negative ($\beta = -.39$, $t = -5.94$, $p < .01$), indicating that the greater the belief by dirty workers that other job opportunities are available in the job market, the less likely they will intend to stay. The other variables in Step 1 did not demonstrate statistical significance, depot location, United Kingdom (Sig. = .14), France (Sig. = .82), age (Sig. = .97), tenure (Sig. = .27), and level of education (Sig. = .91).

6.5.2 Step 2 - Dirty work and nature of work variables

Step 2 of the regression analysis added six attitudinal predictors to the control variables that were in place in Step 1. The results indicate that the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 16.73$, $p = 0.00$). The additional independent variables were: job variety, individual autonomy, group autonomy, satisfaction with work, person job fit and perceived stigma.

Group autonomy, work satisfaction, person-job fit and perceived stigma all showed statistical significance. Group autonomy had a positive beta coefficient of ($\beta = .15$, $t = 2.23$, $p < .05$) while work satisfaction demonstrated a positive beta coefficient of ($\beta = .35$, $t = 4.94$, $p < .01$). Person-job fit had beta coefficients of ($\beta = .12$, $t = 2.08$, $p < .05$) and the results for perceived stigma had a negative

beta coefficient of ($\beta = -.18$, $t = -2.69$, $p < .01$). The results suggest that all four of these variables are valid predictors of intention to stay with work satisfaction being the strongest of the four.

Inserting these work characteristic variables into model contributed substantially to the explained variance of the model (based on change in R square). The results ($\Delta R^2 = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$) indicate that this block of variables added to the explanation of why the respondents intended to stay in their employment more strongly than the other three groups of predictors.

6.5.3 Step 3 - Job satisfaction constructs

Step 3 of the regression analysis included satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with promotion, satisfaction with supervision and distributive justice to the variables already in place from Steps 1 and 2. The results indicate that the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 15.78$, $p = .000$).

Pay satisfaction ($\beta = .18$, $t = 2.70$, $p < .01$.) and distributive justice ($\beta = .12$, $t = 1.91$, $p < .10$) were also found to be statistically significant. The job satisfaction variables in step 3 did contribute to the explained variance of the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.06$, $p < 0.01$), although not as substantially as the work characteristics step.

6.5.4 Step 4 - Job embeddedness variables

In Step 4 of the regression analysis, the model variables related to job embeddedness were included: embeddedness (fit), embeddedness (sacrifice), marital status, dependent children, and home ownership. In respect of this block of variables, there were not significant relationships with intent to stay. The job embeddedness variables did not contribute in any significant way to the explained variance of the model ($\Delta R^2=0.01, p < 0.10$).

With all of the variables included, the only individual predictors found to be strongly significant were: work satisfaction ($\beta = .24, t = 3.31, p < .01$), person-job fit ($\beta = .14, t = 2.41, p < .05$) and pay satisfaction ($\beta = .15, t = 2.13, p < .05$). Both group autonomy and distributive justice were marginally significant ($p < .10$). In terms of control variables, the perceived alternative job opportunities variable was significantly negatively associated with an individual's intent to stay ($\beta = -.21, t = -4.16, p < .01$).

Table 8: Regression results for Intention to Stay

Variables	Intention to Stay			
	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β	Model 4 β
<i>Controls</i>				
UK	-.11	.05	.07	.09
France	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.02
Age	.00	-.02	.01	-.02
Tenure	-.09	-.06	-.07	-.07
Level of Education	-.01	.01	.03	.04
Job Market Opportunities	-.39***	-.28***	-.23***	-.21***
<i>Work Characteristics</i>				
Job Variety		.08	.03	.02
Individual Autonomy		-.04	-.06	-.06
Group Autonomy		.15**	.12*	.12*
Work Satisfaction		.35***	.25***	.24***
Person-Job Fit		.12**	.13**	.14**
Perceived Stigma		-.18***	-.09	-.08
<i>Job Satisfaction Facets</i>				
Pay Satisfaction			.18***	.15**
Promotion Satisfaction			.05	.04
Supervision Satisfaction			.08	.07
Distributive Justice			.12*	.11*
<i>Job Embeddedness</i>				
Embeddedness (Fit)				-.08
Embeddedness (Sacrifice)				.13
Marital Status				-.00
Dependent Child				.04
Home Ownership				.02
R ²	.16	.51	.57	.58
Adjusted R ²	.14	.48	.54	.54
ΔR^2	.16	.35	.06	.01
F Change	6.46***	22.75***	6.83***	.86*

Notes:

Standardized beta coefficients are reported.

* p<.10 (2 tailed), ** p<0.05(2 tailed), *** p<0.01(2 tailed)

6.5.5 Regression findings in relation to the hypotheses

A four-step hierarchical regression was performed, whereby intention to stay was regressed on demographic factors (step 1), work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work (step 2), work satisfaction (step 3) and job embeddedness (step 4).

The second step of the regression involving work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work produced the largest contribution to explained variance ($\Delta R^2=.35$). The control variables ($\Delta R^2=.16$) and job satisfaction ($\Delta R^2=.06$) groupings also contributed to the explained variance but to a lesser degree. Only the grouping pertaining to job embeddedness (step 4) failed to contribute to the explained variance ($\Delta R^2=.01$).

The block of variables related to work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work contributed most to explained variance. That grouping was comprised of the following variables: job variety, individual autonomy, group autonomy, work satisfaction, person-job fit, and perceived stigma. These variables correspond to hypotheses H₁-H₆ restated below:

H₁: Job variety will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₂: Perceptions of individual autonomy will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₃: Perceptions of group autonomy will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₄: Satisfaction with work will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₅: Person-job fit will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₆: Perceived job stigma will be negatively associated with intention to stay.

When this group of variables was viewed in terms of their individual significance, the result for work satisfaction had the strongest significance of any of the predictor variables ($\beta = .24, p < .01$). This validates (H₄) which predicted that satisfaction with work will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. Within the block of variables group autonomy ($\beta = .12, p < .10$) and person-job fit ($\beta = 0.14, p < .05$) were also statistically significant. These results support the assertions in hypotheses H₃, and H₅.

Within the block of control variables, alternative job opportunities / job market was the only statistically significant predictor ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$). The job satisfaction step included two statistically significant variables, pay satisfaction ($\beta = .15, p < .05$) and distributive justice ($\beta = .11, p < .10$). These results support H₇ and H₈ restated below:

H₇: Satisfaction with pay, promotion and supervision will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

H₈: Perceptions of distributive justice will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay.

6.6 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the quantitative phase of the study in order to understand the factors which affect a dirty worker's intention to remain in his job.

The chapter began by restating the research model of the study. The model consisted of 22 variables that were hypothesized to display a significant relationship with dirty worker intent to stay. The independent variables include: job variety, individual and group autonomy, work satisfaction, person-job fit, perceived stigma, pay satisfaction, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, distributive justice, embeddedness (fit and sacrifice), community links (marital status, home ownership, children) and controls (depot location, age, job tenure, education level and alternative job opportunities).

The descriptive statistics for all the variables included in the study, with responses from 266 questionnaires, were reported. The sample consisted of a high percentage of males (99%). The average age of the respondents was 32 years with the majority having completed a total of 12 years of education (70%). Most workers, (84%) had been in their job for 0-5 years. Only 29% of the workers reported being married but almost 52% reported having at least one child living at home. A little over one-third of the sample reported owning a home.

In review of the attitudinal variables, workers reported mean score of intention to stay of 3.58 on a five-point scale. A majority of workers (59%) of the workers agreed or strongly agreed that they intended to stay in their jobs. The independent variables, job variety ($\bar{X} = 3.85$), work-satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 3.85$), supervision satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 3.99$) and person-job fit ($\bar{X} = 4.11$) all accrued comparatively high mean scores indicating favorable views of the work characteristics and general job satisfaction.

Conversely, the workers' responses resulted in somewhat lower mean scores for perceived stigma ($\bar{X} = 2.91$), pay satisfaction ($\bar{X} = 2.78$) and distributive justice ($\bar{X} = 3.19$). The control variable, perceived job opportunities, had a low mean score as well ($\bar{X} = 2.85$).

The chapter also explored the attitudinal differences of the dirty workers based on their country work location in the United Kingdom, France or the United States. The ANOVA tests indicated significant mean score differences for several independent variables in the model. Significant mean differences were found between country locations in seven variables including: age, tenure, group autonomy, work satisfaction, perceived stigma, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction.

The mean scores indicated that workers in the United Kingdom have the oldest workers with a mean age of 33 years and the United States workers were the youngest with a mean score of 28 years. The UK workers also had been on the job the longest with a mean score of 3.36 years. French workers had the least tenure with a mean score of 1.67 years.

The United Kingdom respondents reported the least group autonomy (3.41), work satisfaction (3.72) and satisfaction with promotion (3.01) and supervision (3.82) when compared with the United States and France. Additionally, their responses registered the strongest perception of stigma with their job (3.10).

Conversely, the mean scores for the workers in France indicated the greatest level of satisfaction with work duties (4.06), promotion opportunities (3.92) and supervision (4.35) when compared with the other country locations. The workers in the United States had the highest reported levels of group autonomy (3.91). Overall, the workers in the United Kingdom reported the least favorable opinions regarding their job while the workers in France appear to possess the most positive views of their jobs when the three country locations are compared.

Correlation analysis was utilized to determine any possible relationships between the independent variables and worker intention to stay. The significant variables that were positively associated with intention to stay were: job variety, individual autonomy, group autonomy, satisfaction with work, person-job fit, pay satisfaction, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, distributive justice, embeddedness fit and embeddedness sacrifice. Perceived job alternatives and perceived stigma both displayed a negative correlation with intention to stay.

The hypothesized model was then tested using hierarchical regression analysis. Using a hierarchical approach, variables were added in 4 steps based on theoretical associations (1. control variables, 2. work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty workers, 3. job satisfaction facets and 4. job embeddedness variables). Overall, the step including the work characteristic / employee attitudes to dirty work variables contributed the most to the explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .35$).

The individual regression findings (with all variables included) supported the hypothesized positive relationships between intention to stay and the following predictor variables: group autonomy, satisfaction with work, person-job fit, distributive justice, pay satisfaction. Additionally, the results demonstrated a negative relationship between perceived job alternatives and intention to stay.

A discussion of these results will be offered in Chapter 8, subsequent to presenting the results of the qualitative component of the study, which follow in Chapter 7.

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7.1 Introduction

In conjunction with the quantitative survey data, this study also gained significant qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation at work sites and open-ended survey questions. Much valuable information was derived through question-guided conversation with the study participants. The researcher logged over 90 hours visiting vacant property job sites and company depot locations. The interactions took place in the corporate offices, the depot warehouses and on worksites while the employees carried out their duties. The visits included 53 semi-structured interviews with company employees in: a) Borehamwood / London, United Kingdom (8), b) Northern England, United Kingdom (11), c) Berlin, Germany⁷ (3), d) Paris, France (10) and e) Chicago, Illinois (16).

The semi-structured interviews focused on how the employee came to work at the company, the job duties, previous jobs, team work relations, supervision, upper management, long term job plans, dangerous situations encountered while on job sites and the work environment. Most importantly, the interviews sought to ascertain what aspects of the work duties and organizational environment induce workers to remain in the position. Refer to Table 3, located in Chapter 5, for an outline of the interview subject format.

⁷ Initial interviews were conducted at a company location in Berlin, Germany. However, the number of employees was too small to adequately contribute to the research sample.

This study incorporates ethnographic elements. As with ethnographic research in general, this research attempts to develop a picture of the life of a particular group, of the culture of that group, and of the interactions that characterize the group (Wolcott, 1988:188).

Studies that have a tendency to work primarily with unstructured data, set out to explore the nature of particular social phenomena rather than to test a hypothesis about them, investigate a small number of cases, and analyze the data so as to provide explicit interpretation, could be said to have an ethnographic orientation (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994: 248). This study was, to this extent, ethnographic, a claim which is further underlined by the participant observer element in the research.

As stated, this study derived data from three main sources, individual interviews, survey data and work site passive observation. Patton (1990) outlines three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data - open ended interviews in the form of the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview (Patton, 1990: 280). This study used conversational-style interviews guided by a framework of questions / topics.

The participant interview content was analyzed and classified into 23 separate categories. These were subsequently grouped into four themes: “Work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work”, “Job Satisfaction”, “Job embeddedness”, “Control Variables”.

The open ended comments from the quantitative survey data are also discussed in this chapter. Of the 266 surveys returned, 42 wrote comments as a supplement to the structured closed-ended questions. Of the total, 23 responses were received by United Kingdom workers. The United States respondents contributed 13 comments and France added 6 comments.

Table 9: Open-ended survey comment themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Promotion	11
Pay	10
Nature of Work ⁸	10
Supervision	9
Job satisfaction	6
Coworkers	4
Person-job fit	3
Autonomy	2
Training	1

⁸ One respondent from Manchester specifically mentioned danger on the job. “We are sometimes in potentially life threatening situations. . .”

Because the company's service is cleaning and securing vacant properties, the workers very often encounter revolting conditions in the units. Previous occupants have abandoned the properties in horrible condition, leaving behind garbage, filth, and crime-related paraphernalia. To further aggravate the situation, illegal squatters often take up temporary residence in the units before they are secured. Workers also recount numerous encounters with individuals committing criminal conduct in the work vicinity or even worse, perpetrating criminal acts of robbery or physical assault against the employees themselves.

7.2 Nature of the job: Case studies

7.2.1 Site Visits / Interview overview

The onsite exposure enabled the observer to appreciate the sights, sounds, and smells encountered on this type of job. The observation experience took place in two locations in the United Kingdom and 2 sites in the United States. Table 10 outlines the locations and type of building structure.

Table 10: Worksite observation locations

Liverpool, United Kingdom	Public housing flat
Leeds, United Kingdom	Public housing flat
Chicago, United States	3 Story foreclosure house
Chicago, United States	2 Story apartment building

7.2.2 Liverpool, United Kingdom housing estate flat

The first job site visit took place in Liverpool, United Kingdom at an abandoned council property. As they drove to the site, the depot manager (Employee A), informed the researcher that the inhabitants had left the council owned flat without any notice, which was typical of the units they secured. The cleaning and clearing staff were just opening the front door as we arrived. The workers had to forcefully push the door open due to the enormous pile of litter blocking the entryway. Once the door was open enough for them to enter, we could see a massive pile of rubbish strewn across the floor consisting of discarded food containers, old clothing and dirty, tattered toys. There was a strong stench of animal feces and urine.

The four workers who faced the task of clearing and cleaning this apartment seemed unfazed by the off-putting scene. They were all dressed in the company's reflective yellow uniform vests with thick black pants, steel tipped boots and puncture resistant safety gloves to help shield them from the filth that awaited them. Armed with a plentiful supply of refuse bags, buckets and cleaning tools the workers waded through the property to evaluate and divide the work tasks.

Assessing the scene, an older worker (Employee B), who had worked at the job for five years remarked, "Oh, this isn't so bad- just watch where you step." The team leader, (Employee C), chimed in, "Yeah, this looks like it was a drug house, there's sure to be some needles lying about". To confirm this assertion, he walked to a corner and shifted a pile of rubbish. Within seconds, he held up a used hypodermic needle. "That's why we wear these gloves." As another

worker, (Employee D) walked past he commented, “Amazing how people can live like animals isn’t it”? Realizing the time constraints for their daily assignments, the workers moved toward their allocated duties proceeding to jump into the project without hesitation.

Employee C explained that each person would begin with their own room to bag up the garbage covering the floors. He would be working in the living room and the other three had the kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom. He had doubts whether the two industrial garbage dumpsters on the street out front would be sufficient to hold all the garbage to be carried away. Sensing his urgency to get into his work, the researcher made her way to the kitchen in the next room.

Like the living room, the kitchen was also filled with garbage. However, the most notable feature was the missing cabinet doors, the smashed glass stove door and the unsightly state of the sinks. Noting this damage, Employee D muttered that the council would need to be replacing a lot of the fixtures in this unit. A brownish liquid had oozed onto the floor from beneath the kitchen sink and the wood was obviously warped. To give the researcher a full appreciation of the conditions, he motioned for her to walk closer to the sink. As D shifted the garbage to one side, a collection of cock roaches scampered onto the counter.

When asked about the bugs, D told how the workers always change into their street clothes in the depot locker room before coming home. He explained, “I always change out of my work clothes before going home so I don’t accidentally take any cock roaches home in my cuffs or boot treads”.

7.2.3 Leeds, United Kingdom housing estate flat

The second site visit took place at a public housing estate flat in Leeds, United Kingdom. A four member team was just pulling up in a company work van when the depot manager and researcher arrived. The streets were empty and the flat had been checked to ensure that there were no squatters. The workers began going over the project with the manager, A. The team leader of this group, (Employee F), who has been with the company for five years, told A, the depot manager, “The inside isn’t too bad but the outside space outback is going to be a big project”. They determined that two workers would begin with the clearing inside and the other two would handle the garden area.

As we walked through the front door, there was a rancid smell of rotting food and stale cigarette smoke. The carpet in the large living room had huge brown stains and was littered with what appeared to be cigarette burns. One of the workers, (Employee G), mumbled that they will clean it the best they can but probably it will need to be replaced. He added, “We’re pretty good at this, but sometimes there’s no ‘fixin’ the mess the people leave behind”. Following his comment, Employee G pulled out an industrial rubbish bag and began gathering up some discarded clothing in one of the corners.

At the back of that room was a glass door leading to a small garden space. Team leader, F motioned for the researcher to step toward the door as he opened it to the outside. As we stepped forward, there was a mountain of waste facing us. A quick glance at this ad hoc garbage dump revealed a kitchen chair missing a leg, empty food cans, used kitty litter, old clothing and a couch missing its cushions

all piled as high as the fence. One of the workers, (Employee H) assigned to clean outdoors, had begun sifting through the debris. He commented to me, “Well, I guess some people think it’s not their job to clean up after themselves, but that’s why we have a job -- taking care of other people’s messes”.

The researcher spoke to H briefly regarding what he enjoys most about the job. “I enjoy the outside work best. Usually, they let me work in the garden areas because my team knows that. Plus, the cold doesn’t bother me”. He said that once they get the garbage cleared, he can then begin to feel more like he’s a landscaper and a handyman. “Nobody cares for hauling away garbage but you take the bad with the good.” Employee H continued,

Probably the most time consuming part of the outside work is dealing with graffiti. When trespassers come around, they can make an awful mess of the building and the fences. . .depending on the size of the markings, we either use paint remover or sand them off. If it’s a huge area we can repaint over them. Now the property managers are getting smarter about using anti-grip paint so the graffiti won’t stick on places where people keep writing on the walls.

Back inside, Employees F and G continued emptying out the rooms of rubble. Employee F had moved into the bathroom where the toilet was plugged and had overflowed onto the floor. He reassured me that not every unit was left in this type of disarray. However, he acknowledged that the company usually was called in when things were quite bad. “If the apartments are in good shape, all that’s needed is a quick onceover and they bring in new tenants. Unfortunately, the ones they call us for, will need to sit vacant for a bit while they are repaired and cleared out. That’s when they need our steel windows and doors as well as our industrial cleaning methods”. Employee F added, “I’m just glad that I don’t live

in a place like this. Seeing the drug den or squatted units really makes me appreciate that I have a job and don't have to live near these people".

The researcher last spoke to (Employee J), a 21 year old worker, who had been on the job for about a year. He mentioned that his team had been in a unit down the street where the residents had apparently started a fire with a cigarette. The people had moved away so as not to face any consequences. The worker spoke about the smell most of all and how the walls had to be scrubbed and would need to be repainted. The discussion about the fire damage led to him explaining some of the crime scenes they had been called in to clean up. He spoke about his aversion for dead body scenes. After the coroner's office takes the body and they have opened up the flat, the company is called in to make it livable again. Employee J emphasized, "I don't much care for cleaning up blood or the fluids from the body, but I guess someone's got to do it".

7.2.4 Chicago, foreclosure three-story house

Unlike the visits to the United Kingdom worksites where the researcher observed cleaning and clearing teams at work, in the United States, the workers were working with steel doors and windows to secure a vacant apartment. The first visit was to a high rise tenancy building that city code requires to have the doors and windows steel secured if vacant. The manager stated that there had been a big lawsuit in Chicago a few years back in which a boy had been thrown out of a window in a high rise public housing building.

Before driving to the work site, the researcher was issued a company hard hat and work coat in attempts to blend in with staff. The national operations manager advised her to “stay close by”, not call any undue attention to herself and to stay alert as this was a high crime neighborhood where drug dealing, gangs and shootings were common. The street on which the house sat closely bordered two public housing developments. As they pulled up, the operations manager pointed out several buildings across the street that were known drug houses. He commented that due to the light rain that was falling, many of the guys they constantly saw on the street were staying inside. He said that like the rest of us, they don’t like to get wet. However, he did note that there were a couple of young men standing on a covered porch a few houses down across the street. “Those guys are still conducting business”.

Several employees were unloading equipment from the company vehicle. Due to the size of the house, there were six installers working on site that day. The researcher and the operations manager walked up to the large dilapidated house where the group team leader, (Employee K) stood installing a steel front door. Employee K stopped drilling and took off his safety goggles as we approached. The team leader, who stated he had been working for the company for 13 years, accompanied us into the house.

The house stood mostly empty of debris. Torn and stained carpet covered the floors and the walls were riddled with holes and cracked plaster. The most distinctive aspect of the home was the intense graffiti that coated the walls. Employee K walked over and pointed to one conspicuous marking that was

painted or etched repeatedly on the wall. The design was an upward facing three pronged pitchfork. He said, while pointing to the trident, “These are gang symbols. We find different ones at the sites depending on the area”. K added, “That’s the sign for the ‘Latin Disciples’. They operate around this neighborhood and they’ve been hanging out in here. We’re in the area the gangs call ‘killa city’.

When asked if he felt intimidated by the prospect of gang violence, he shrugged his shoulders. Appearing nonchalant about the issue, Employee K added, “It’s part of the job.” Additionally, he smiled as he pointed to the front door they had just entered, “Why do you think I was putting the bolted steel door on first thing? That keeps them out when we’re in here working”.

Up on the second floor of the house, the researcher spoke to a young man (Employee L) who had been with the company for three years. Employee L had recently returned to work following an accident in which a steel door fell on his hand breaking several bones. Despite the accident, what he feared most about his work environment was the potential for airborne disease emanating from the blood, feces and vomit that were common in the vacant properties. L remembered one house he had secured recently in which people had broken in and had defecated all over the house. “They even wiped the crap up and down the walls. That was one place I almost refused to work at because it was too disgusting but my team got it done”.

7.2.5 Chicago, two story apartment building

As the researcher and the operations manager traveled down the alleyway behind the home to reach the next worksite, the manager pointed out all of the abandoned houses in the neighborhood. Driving behind them, the researcher could see into the dark hollow houses with broken windows. The backyards were cluttered with discarded mattresses, bags of trash and the back gates were peppered with graffiti.

At the worksite, the front door had already been secured with the company's imposing steel grid. The operations manager typed in a code near the handle which popped the door open. He entered the door first, calling out to the workers inside to let them know who was entering the property. We walked through an entranceway room with a huge hole plunging into the basement. The workers had placed wood planks over the hole and the researcher was cautioned to walk carefully.

There was a three-person team working at this property. The team had already covered many of the windows with the company's thick steel grates, making the house dim and murky. They used a flashlight to walk up one flight of stairs to find two workers (Employee M and Employee N) on the second floor. They had lights attached to their hard hats so they could see where they were going. These employees had each been with the company for over a decade and their banter revealed how comfortable they felt together. They soon confirmed that in fact, they were good friends and that their families often socialized together.

During the individual interviews, M, voiced strong feelings about the dirty aspects of his job. Although he had an abundance of anecdotes about unpleasant circumstances, Employee M described the homes with dead animals to be what he detested the most. He explained, “Animals are left behind or come in when it’s empty and die inside”. Beyond the obvious odor, what he complained about was the flea infestation that often accompanied the dead animal. Employee M further described that “the rooms are crawling with fleas and they get all over you and in your clothes”.

Despite a lengthy conversation about the gang shootings, dead human and animal bodies, and disgusting infestations, M had no intention of leaving his job anytime soon. He cited his primary reason for staying as the strong bonds he has with his coworkers. Also, after so many years on the job, M credited himself, “I know this work and I’m good at it.”

7.3 Nature of the work

Comments and poignant anecdotes by the workers related to the dirty work components on the job provide tremendous insight into how the employees feel about and manage these repugnant and dangerous aspects of their job. Many of those interviewed admitted that many of the situations they encountered would be considered disgusting by most and suggested that the majority of people would be unwilling or even unable to carry out the tasks.

A 38 year old worker (Employee O), who has done this type of work for the past six years in the City of Chicago, discussed the condition of the housing units they clean out. “I’m not opposed to the cleaning and clearing work even though it’s disgusting. The way these people leave the project housing is sick and a lot of times squatters come in and make it even worse”. In spite of how foul the job can be, O acknowledged, “I’m being paid for it. I’m happy to have a job to support my family”.

A female worker (Employee P) on the job for three years in Leeds, United Kingdom related how she had seen a lot of squatters removed from the vacant units. She candidly told how the places with squatters were “tough to clean because people are living like animals. They leave behind rotten food, cockroaches are running all over and everything is covered with piss and crap”.

A 21 year-old Chicago worker (Employee Q) told of his dislike for working in the projects. Unlike many of his colleagues, he did not grow up in a rough area so Employee Q found a lot of the work sites in public housing to be shocking. One image that lingered with him was when he saw a pack of rats eating a cat inside one of the apartments. “People leave food and junk all over the floor. I can’t stand rats but they’re all over in some of our worksites”. Although he often finds the work sites disgusting, Employee Q admitted that he was getting used to the atmosphere and that the shock factor was often a bit exhilarating. He said his days went by very quickly admitting that some of that was due to the gross discoveries and seeing criminal activity first-hand.

One 37 year-old worker (Employee R) told of seeing a dead body on site. It was crawling with maggots and after the police removed the body, the company workers had the unpleasant task of cleaning up the scene. In a similar scenario, a worker in France (Employee S) told how his crew had come across a dead body at a site. Employee S surmised it was a drug overdose. “We knew there was something dead as soon as we got in the place - there is no mistaking that smell”.

Regardless of the country, all of the workers described similar work conditions. A 53 year-old employee (Employee T), who has worked for the company in both United Kingdom and France as a fitter, explained that no matter where public housing is located they “bring the same type of people and violence”.

Dead animals and the bugs that accompanied them were mentioned repeatedly in worker interviews would find in the properties. Workers also commented on the frequency of rats scampering in the properties. Probably the most vivid account on this subject was stated by Employee U from Chicago, who had been on the job for 11 years. He indicated that he first smelled the putrid odor when he opened the door. On the floor, was a dead dog. Although he admitted that they often found dead dogs and cats in the properties, this dog was wearing a collar so he guessed it had been someone’s pet. As Employee U walked closer he saw that the dog had been cut open and the dog’s ribs had been removed. What has stuck with him about the scene was that someone had butchered the dog- possibly to eat.

7.3.1 Danger

In addition to the disgusting tasks, most of the employees were able to tell of the dangerous conditions in the distressed areas where a lot of their work takes place. As Employee V, who had worked for the company 10 years in Chicago stated, “I’ve seen a lot of drugs being sold and people are pretty obvious about carrying weapons. People are lined up near the job sites buying drugs . . . it’s interesting to watch them run when the police come by”.

There were recurring statements from participants that the garbage discarded in the buildings they cleaned could be hazardous. Drug needles and crack pipes were a common occurrence. Workers also mentioned that they found guns and knives in the piles of refuse. In addition to being cautious to avoid accidental discharge of the guns, the weapons needed to be turned over to police in case they had any evidentiary value.

Of course, proper handling of the items and the wearing of proper safety gear was an absolute necessity. Employee F from Chicago talked about shootings happening out on the street while they are inside securing the property. He downplayed the danger by joking that they weren’t shooting at the workers so it was ok. He also kidded that the workers should be issued bullet-proof vests but that he did not see that happening any time soon. The teams often find bullet holes in the screens and doors.

Some had personally experienced instances of violence or property crimes on site or situations in which they felt physically threatened on a work site. Employee

X, a 51 year-old, who had worked for the company in Chicago for one year indicated how he was almost robbed during his initial training on the job. “I was separated from the other guys and some guy walked up to me holding a knife and told me to give him my wallet”. Fortunately, his other coworkers walked in at that time and the attacker ran off so he was not injured or robbed. Still, Employee X vividly recalls the fear he felt with a knife being waved at him.

Employee Y, a 38 year-old Chicago worker for six years, complained of having work equipment taken from the company work truck. He explained that many of the safety measures needed to prevent theft really slowed down their work. “Having to lock the truck every trip into the building is a real pain, but having things stolen is worse so we have to make sure we do it. Plus, there are people watching us and they act fast so just a minute with a truck left unlocked and we can lose a bunch of expensive tools”.

In a more alarming incident, Employee Y described:

I was working with one other guy in the back of a house one time and a couple of guys came in. One of them had a gun and they robbed us both of what we had in our wallets. I had \$80. I don’t know how much the other guy lost. It happens and I wouldn’t quit my job over it. We just have to take as much precaution as we can to keep an eye out for bad ones coming in on us.

The US national operations manager also explained that one of their fitters in Los Angeles had recently been attacked and brutally beaten on site. He survived but was left with serious injuries. Despite that incident, the manager had not seen any fearful responses or apprehension on the part of the other workers as a result of the assault.

The researcher found that some workers did not want to be aligned with the work of the police. Several of the employees during the Chicago site visits discussed the squatters who would come back to a dwelling while the workers were in the process of securing it. These individuals, who had been living illegally in the building or merely using it as a site to store their drugs and other contraband, would ask the workers to allow them to come in and get their “stuff”. It was unspoken, yet the workers felt it was pretty obvious that the squatters wanted to get their drug stash. Employee Z stated that, “They hide the drugs up in the light fixture. They remove the light bulb and shove the drugs up inside the socket”. There seemed to be a consensus among the workers who mentioned it that if the squatters just wanted their property (illegal or not), the workers turned a blind eye and allowed them in for a minute to quickly grab it and leave.

Employee Z, a team leader at the Chicago location, elaborated on this point, stating that workers were unofficially trained to loudly announce on the street, when they arrived at a jobsite which buildings or apartments they were set to secure that day. They would then take a long time unloading their tools and equipment, thereby giving the gang members and drug dealers an opportunity to go in the property to retrieve their belongings. Aside from potentially avoiding violence on site, Employee Z also quantified that it was better for business overall. He reasoned that if a valuable quantity of drugs or weapons was left in a secured building, the criminal would go to extreme measures to get in the property. This would result in damaged equipment and a breached property which cuts into profits and is bad for the company reputation.

7.3.2 Familiarity with the neighborhoods

Because many of the employees grew up in distressed areas, this made some of them less apprehensive about going into rough areas to work. However, employee Z, explained that workers sometimes convey concern about going back into the neighborhood where they grew up and still know people. “Some guys like to go work in their old neighborhoods and they can get along with the folks there so that’s a benefit for us. Other guys don’t want the gangbangers in their old neighborhood to know that they work for the company that closes up the houses”. Employee Z could not say whether it was owing to embarrassment or fear of retribution that they hesitated to return to these familiar areas. Either way, he tried not to send people into neighborhoods where they would be uneasy. Employee Z deemed that to be an unsafe situation for the employee, as well as his teammates.

He also commented that racial lines play a role in whether a worker is comfortable working in a specific neighborhood. In Chicago, many of the work teams are comprised of workers of Mexican heritage. Although they may have grown up in a rough, gang-infested part of town, going into an area that is mainly made up of blacks is a completely different feeling for them. Fortunately, the general feeling was that the workers know how to act in an assertive yet non-confrontational way on site, so the criminals (regardless of their race) leave the workers alone. Many of the workers interviewed remarked that they were able to handle working in dangerous areas because of this “skill” of appearing comfortable and confident.

7.3.3 Stoicism

Overall, the workers seemed resigned to the work conditions and potential danger, however, the manner in which they discussed it appeared to depend on whether they were speaking in a private interview or during conversations on the job site within ear shot of their co-workers. During the site observation, the workers presented a rugged and fearless impression.

A 25 year-old employee (Employee FF), based in the United States, commented,

I grew up in the projects. Yeah, there are a lot of bad people walking around so you need to keep an eye out. People try to intimidate you going into the empty apartments but you have to do your job and not act scared. I think I can deal with the gangs and rough stuff better than some of the guys because I know what's up with them. You have to be careful though. I carry a metal stick in my tool kit just in case.

In the one-on-one interviews, the workers frequently conveyed a healthy fear of the distressed areas in which they worked. They both appreciated and needed their teammates to be with them on site. As Employee K in Chicago stated, "I would never go on a job site alone. You need a couple of guys keeping an eye on the people in those areas".

7.3.4 Public perceptions of the work

Unfortunately, some residents in the neighborhoods link the installers to an unwelcome police presence. Police officers must sometimes accompany the workers to job sites for protection which aggravates that unpopular perception.

As Employee AA, aptly expressed,

On some of the worksites, we are ousting squatters. When that happens, we need to have the police on the scene because it can get ugly. Some of the people living in those neighborhoods don't

like to see people getting kicked out even if they are doing bad things there”.

Noticeably frustrated AA continued, “It’s really stupid because these squatting people are not the type of people you’d think they want living near them. Still, they don’t like the authority putting their nose in the situation. They see us as part of the system”.

Employee BB provided an illustration of this point, “We have had bricks and rocks thrown at the truck and at us while we are walking into the buildings”. Still, he showed some optimism by adding that although there were almost daily confrontations with people at sites when he first began working at the company in Chicago 10 years ago, now he believes residents have become more accustomed to the company’s presence so there is less animosity toward them.

Employee CC in Paris told that there are certain areas of social housing on the outskirts of Paris called *Banlieues* (translated as “suburbs”), where the company would not go to secure properties. The employee of 15 years told that even the police were hesitant to go into these areas due to the tremendous violence. Employee CC recalled that the workers had rocks thrown at that them and that several vehicles had even been set on fire by defiant residents of the buildings. Eventually, because they were being associated with the police for the work they did, the company removed all the markings from their trucks that would even go near the really tough areas. CC also mentioned that, “If we want to secure in the terribly violent areas, we go very early in the morning while the people who make trouble are sleeping”.

7.3.5 Pride in the company and their work

Worker comments indicated that many felt proud to be employed by this company as well as the work they performed. They were not only proud of their ability to endure the physical and dirty nature and danger of their everyday work environment but they were pleased with the end result of their efforts. They would often arrive at a filthy, drug den and leave the building orderly and secure. They were removing the bad elements of society and performing a service for the community.

Some workers, (particularly in the United States depots) felt they were granted some authority by their necessary association with the police. Despite some visible disapproval by the neighbors, many of the workers revealed a pride at “cleaning up the neighborhood”. Some seemed to enjoy what they perceived to be the implied authority that accompanied the uniform and truck as they rolled onto a site to get rid of the “bad guys”.

Employee EE, a brawny, long-tenured worker in Bradford, United Kingdom, unashamedly told how he handled squatters. “I’m not scared of squatters and I will go confront them and get them out of properties we are supposed to be securing. It’s not officially part of my job but my bosses know I do it and they are happy with the results”.

Although some employees strongly report being disgruntled with the treatment received within the company from upper management, many show strong signs of feeling united and proud to the company image. For example, a 57 year old

French employee from Saint Denis, commented at the end of his survey, “*Je suis fier me travailler pour* [company name].” translates as [“I am proud to work for [company name”].

Z in Chicago mentioned that some of the crews will go to one of the worker’s homes for lunch during the work day. He noted that the workers appeared to take pride in pulling up to their homes in the company-marked truck. To invite coworkers to their homes also suggested friendly, hospitable relationships among the team members.

Driving their company truck into their neighborhood indicates a pride to show they are affiliated with this company that is well known around the city and secondly, that the company entrusts them with a company vehicle. “They seem proud to work for an organization that is cleaning up the nasty neighborhoods”.

Many appeared to feel pleased of their ability to hold a respectable job. Any judgments from the outside world appear to be dismissed and met with self-assured amusement. An employee from Leeds, UK stated, “I’ve had some people shouting rubbish at me when I’m carrying my cleaning supplies because they know I’m in the place cleaning up someone else’s mess. Still I got a job and they’re just walking around causing trouble. How can they make me feel bad”?

7.4 Satisfaction with facets of job

Many of the worker comments pertained to job satisfaction (Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey (1985) (i.e. pay, promotion, contingent rewards, supervision, coworkers, the work itself, and communication).

7.4.1 Pay and promotion

Both in open-ended comments and interviews workers frequently made reference to pay issues. Given that the company had a tendency to pay not much more than minimum wage, a predicable comment was that they wanted more pay. As Employee GG in Chicago stated, "I really enjoy my job. Sometimes I feel I am worth more money than I am given, however, this is not a valid enough reason to leave". The pay rate itself was not the primary subject of most of the pay-related comments. Instead, it was management's promises to give pay raises that have not been kept. The commentary seemed to relate more to the feeling of being misled by upper management rather than the pay being unacceptable for the required work.

For instance, Employee HH, an employee from Los Angeles, U.S. commented, "I was told that after 90 days I would get a raise. It has been six months and still no raise. My paperwork has not even been put in. I asked if my performance was not acceptable and they told me I do an excellent job. So I wonder why I still haven't seen my raise". Employee JJ opined, "Morale is very low generally due to no pay rises in 3 ½ years, to limited prospects of training or promotion and total lack of interest in worker's opinions or welfare".

The employees expressed similar sentiments regarding promotions. Although many of them anticipated rising in the company, the feeling was that the management did not follow through on programs to promote deserving workers. As Employee KK put it, I would like to push for promotion but I think where my depot is positioned, I will not get the chance to move up the ladder”.

Despite the negative comments, the employees were optimistic that they would have promotional opportunities. One long tenured employee stated, “I have been involved with this work since I left school at the age of 16. I have progressed through the ranks from being in the yard, to fitter, to a team leader and now supervisor and I’m looking forward to the next chance to step up again and hopefully in years to come become a director”. Another employee in Paris, France wrote, “*Je revis totalement depuis que je travaille chez [the company]. Je compte évoluer au sein de l’entreprise*”. [“I have a second life since I work for [the company]. I hope to grow within the company”].

A 41 year-old employee from Hull expressed optimism that his hard work would be rewarded by the company, “I do enjoy my work and feel appreciated by the company most times. Promotion is something I’ll strive for at [the company] and hope my keenness and enthusiasm is recognized”.

Many of the workers confirmed both in interviews and in their open end responses that they intended to remain working at the company. Of those interviewed, many spoke about remaining and succeeding with the company. For example, this French employee proclaimed “*Je vais tout faire pour grandir au*

sein de cette société.” [translates as “I will do everything I can to grow within this company”.] A 28 year-old employee from Carlisle, UK asserted, “I really enjoy my job, sometimes I feel I am worth more money than I am given however this is not a valid enough reason to leave. I feel I have the right minerals to climb the company ladder”.

7.4.2 Supervision

Quite a few of the employees interviewed felt that they “were treated well” at their supervisors at their local depots. For example, on the job site in Liverpool, the entire team of workers had nothing but glowing praise for their depot manager. Their comments exuded respect for their supervisor on a personal and professional level.

Along with those employees who expressed satisfaction with their supervisors, there were of course, those individuals who felt their supervisor could be more responsive to their needs. For example, an employee complained on the questionnaire, “I feel that my work is not appreciated by any kind of management, I also find it hard to approach my supervisors about my job and the others I work with. Nothing seems to be done to make things better or easier for myself and others, there is no professionalism either from my supervisor or manager”!

The survey comments and interviews demonstrate differing views on whether the organization promotes a supportive environment (e.g. visible appreciation, open communication and perceived compassion toward its workers). Similar to the

supervision section above, it appears that many workers felt supported by their immediate depot supervisor.

However, overall the comments do not indicate that workers feel there is a supportive environment fostered by upper management. There appears to be a tremendous divide in how the workers feel about the company on a local level versus how they regard the company's higher management levels. For instance, one employee wrote in his comments, "I think the company is not very helpful when a member of staff has a problem. When a question is asked it rarely goes any further. We are just left waiting for an answer or just told no". Another declared, "We are sometimes in potentially life threatening situations and the management are aware of this but don't care. They are told about it on a daily basis yet do nothing about it. We don't mind the job; it's the way the company is run that bothers everyone".

Some employees exhibited extreme disdain for the company's senior management staff with name calling and harsh criticisms. In one particularly caustic comment, a 25 year-old employee from Manchester, UK wrote, "We (the slaves) don't get paid enough when it's us doing all the craft but management and the fat cats- a.k.a. - the investors get all the money and don't give a shit about us." Another commented, "A feeling of being undervalued and ignored by management permeates the workforce being judged as brain dead lobotomized cave men".

7.4.3 Task variety

Many of the workers also indicated that task variety was a positive feature of their jobs (Price & Mueller, 1986). Employee O from Chicago remarked, “I like the fact that everyday it’s usually a different job site which gives it some variety”. It’s all the same overall kind of work, but some days it’s a walk up house. Other days it’s a CHA [Chicago Housing Authority] high rise”. Although the daily assignments have the same general components, there is variation in the locations and specific requirements for each job. Task variety ensured that the job was interesting for many workers.

7.4.4. Fit with the work

Many of the workers noted the “special” nature of their work and in doing so, intimated that they possessed unique abilities and greater fortitude than workers in other (less dirty) industries. They were keen to point out that the work is physically demanding, often disgusting and potentially dangerous. However, the ensuing comment was almost always something to the effect of “but it doesn’t bother me” or “I can handle it but other people would probably struggle with it”. As predicted, the workers do appear to boost their individual identities by pointing out what makes them uniquely qualified to do this type of work.

Employee DD from Chicago discussed how he secured flooded public housing buildings in New Orleans immediately following the Katrina Hurricane. He spoke intensely about the awful state of the units they secured. “Everything stunk like mildew and the houses were full of rotting food that had been left behind as people fled their homes because of the flood”. During that initial time period,

recovery teams were still finding bodies in buildings. According to DD, the fitters came across a few bodies within the homes. His comments revealed how his exposure to this grave experience had left a profound impression.

Regardless of what they may truly feel, workers generally still portray a self-assured, masculine approach to their work and their ability to overcome the adversities that come with it. When asked about how they feel working in dangerous areas, most just shrug it off as manageable.

Many of the workers thrive on the idea that they are able to do this while other people would run away from the work duties and the dangers that come with it. Individually, they feel like part of something special for being able to contend with the work. This is part of their identity. Their willingness to continue with the job could suggest that they do not want to do or say anything that would undermine the enhanced self-identity that is derived from this difficult work.

7.4.4.1 Physical demands of the work and workload

Many of the workers spoke about the level of physical strength and endurance required to fulfill the duties of the job. Although most mentioned how physically draining the work is and how much strength is necessary to complete many of the tasks, none of the workers deemed this a reason for leaving. Instead, their ability to do the work appeared to be more a testament to their ruggedness. As one French employee wrote in his comments, “*Ce travail, demande une condition physique. J’ai aucun doute sur ma condition. . .*” [translates as “This

job requires a great physical condition I have no doubt that I have the necessary condition”].

On a related point, another French worker saw the physical demands as a positive in that it provides the opportunity for him to stay in good physical health. “*C’est un travail physique qui m’en apporte tous les jours*”. [translates as “It is a physical demanding job which keeps me in shape everyday”].

Employee P of Leeds asserted, “I know I can handle this job when a lot of people would be too weak or lazy to come in here and do the hard work”. Similarly, Employee G, discussed the demands of his job, “Placing the steel doors is very heavy, hard work. I am very tired at the end of each day. An older or out of shape man would probably have difficulty doing this job”.

7.4.4.2 Outdoor work

Another theme that emerged was that workers enjoy being outside and working with their hands rather than sitting at a desk all day. From that perspective, this desire to work outdoors in sometimes adverse weather conditions as well as tackle a variety of hands-on tasks makes these individuals a good fit for this type of work. During the interviews, several workers expressed their preference for clearing out the gardens at the flats (which is also part of the overall cleaning and clearing jobs) rather than cleaning inside the units.

Worker H from Leeds commented, “I enjoy different tasks in life and I’m not afraid to put my mind and hands into different jobs. I enjoy working in gardens

and building decks and fences”. Another worker told the researcher that “it would be torture to have to sit in an office all day”. Evidently, there are aspects of this dirty job that are a good match for these particular employees.

7.4.4.3 Skills and training

Several employees noted how they had increased their skills while working for the company. Whether they were more efficient cleaners or had developed talents at installing the steel doors and windows, employees remarked that they had honed their abilities (through on the job experience or organized company training) to fit with the needs of the job.

Because much of these skills are not overly transferable to other industries (particularly with the installation and removal of the steel doors and windows), most of the employees will need to stay with the company to utilize any acquired work-related talents. Many of the employees did give the impression that they intended to use their skills to grow within the company. One long term employee remarked, “I’ve been doing this job for nearly 15 years now so I must have good skills for the job to have been doing it for so long”.

Some of the workers indicated that they felt they were a better fit for this type of dirty and dangerous job than most people. Relating to the pride element discussed earlier, some of the workers feel that not everyone would be able to handle this work believing that the average person would be disgusted and fearful on-site whereas the workers are comfortable or a “good fit” with the job.

7.4.5 Individual and group autonomy

Many of the workers liked the fact that the job sites provided a distinct feeling of autonomy. In particular, the employees liked having their own team van assigned. Although they have certain work projects given to them, several workers noted that they did not have a supervisor “looking over their shoulder all day”. The work groups have a team leader among them, but that individual still seemed to be part of the team rather than a management figure. On site, most felt they could work it out among their teammates how the project would be completed. The researcher sensed that this feeling of freedom with basic task guidelines was a desirable feature of the job. Employee N told her, “This job offers us a lot of autonomy. Most days I feel like my own boss”.

7.4.6 Coworkers / Socialization

During the interviews and site visits the researcher looked for signs of connections between the employees and their co-workers, the physical environment and the local area (Mitchell et al., 2001). Many of the employees mentioned how they enjoyed working with their teammates. On the job site, the workers bantered back and forth as they worked. They gave the impression that they enjoyed socializing and that their coworkers were important to them.

Employee G from Leeds, emphasized how much he appreciated his team. He highlighted that they trust each other to do a good job as well as have a good time chatting as they work. This was a common outlook among the workers in all the locations visited as most stated how much they liked their teammates.

Further, many of them socialized with their fellow workers after work. At one depot, several employees mentioned how they frequently go bowling together.

The operations manager in Chicago noted that the depot has a “family atmosphere”. He cited the example that “if one of the guy’s cars breaks down, one of his buddies will go pick him up”. Although some workers were neutral on the issue of socializing with their fellow employees, there were no comments expressed about disliking coworkers.

Many of the workers had been working for their company for a relatively long period. In Chicago, most of those interviewed had been there at least five years. A few had been there since the company had originated 11 years earlier. This tenure suggests a definite link with the company and possibly a feeling of a vested interest in the company’s well-being. One employee expressed this sentiment by writing, “I feel I do the job to the best of my ability and by doing so hope I can help the company grow”.

A lot of the workers told how they had grown up in the work area and that they still lived relatively close to the depot location. This familiarity with these rough areas provides both a link to the community but also improves the employee’s fit with the physical work environment. Further, the short work commute was considered a strong positive by those interviewed.

A few workers spoke about their spouses and children and the need to take care of them. Several stated that taking care of their kids was their main priority.

They saw favorable opportunities to rise within the company which would allow them to provide a good life for their families.

Some even likened their work place dynamic to that of a family. Trust was something that came up repeatedly in conversations with the operations workers. Some even emphasized it as being part of why they are even able to do the job. Without trusting their team mates, they would feel nervous to go into these abandoned buildings in rough neighborhoods.

One worker in Chicago who had been with the company for 10 years discussed a few men he had worked with and did not trust them on the job. He observed, “They didn’t pay attention to what’s happening around them and I didn’t feel they had my back”. He continued, “Nobody wanted to work with them and of the ones I’m thinking of, none of them made it beyond the first few weeks at the company”.

The themes of friendship with co-workers, camaraderie and trust came up repeatedly during the interviews. One commented, “it’s almost a military type trust where we all have each other’s backs.” They not only seemed to enjoy working with their teams, they felt pride and identified with their teammates. Also, there was an “us versus them” attitude that arose during the discussions.

One worker in Northern England stated:

We had three guys walk in a house when two of us were upstairs cleaning. We had no way out and they were harassing us and sizing up what they could get from us. They were just bored and looking to stir up some problems”. The job was big enough that there was another crew nearby, so we got them over to us right away. We all look out for each other.

When speaking of gangs, drug dealers and squatters, it was clear that the employees felt that their colleagues supported them against the dangers and filth that awaited them at every job site. The employee comments overwhelmingly reflected a feeling of “belonging” and a team atmosphere. As mentioned previously, the workers generally display a high regard for their co-workers, viewing them as friends. For example a 21 year old from Kilmarnock indicated, “I am very happy with my job and enjoy every minute with my job and colleagues”.

7.5 Perceived job alternatives / Job market

Very little was said about alternative job opportunities available to the workers during interviews or in open-ended responses on the survey. Overall, most workers did not seem to be interested in exploring what might be available to them in their local job market. One long-tenured Hispanic worker in Chicago commented, “If I found something better than this job, of course I would take it-but that isn’t gonna happen”. When asked to elaborate, he said that it was not because he was unhappy with the current job. He did seem to suggest that he perceived opportunities to be scarce in the Chicago job market.

Many of the workers explained that they had come to this job via a friend or family member who already worked for the company. In some ways, this is beneficial for the organization to have workers with personal connections. However, several of the managers noted that this type of hiring had led to conflict because of cliques being formed, perceived favoritism and abuse of

power by the team leaders. The U.S. CEO, operations manager and depot manager all used the expression, “The Mexican Mafia” to describe the faction that had formed in the Chicago depot with friends and family becoming too tightly connected.

In response to that situation, the operations manager stated that within the past couple of years they had purposefully avoided hiring people through personal recommendations. Unfortunately, because workers were not aware of this policy some of those interviewed mentioned that they were offended when the company did not hire friends and family that they had put forward for a position.

7.6 Conclusion

For a variety of reasons, the employees observed and interviewed appeared relatively attached with their employment at the company. Although not all were content with the pay and promotion potential, they did seem linked to their work depots and teammates. Additionally, their comments suggest that they derive some personal and group identity through their bonds at the depot level.

They acknowledge the filth and dangers that accompany the position, but not one person intimated that these aspects of the job would induce him to leave the company. In fact, the majority seemed to be proud of their ability to endure the difficult features of the job in doing so, indicated that their skills and abilities were congruent with the job.

There was evidence that the workers felt proud of helping to improve rough neighborhoods in their community by eradicating the imprint of squatters and criminal elements occupying the vacant buildings. Overall, the workers predominately indicated that they intended to remain with the company for the foreseeable future. Of all the factors explored here, the social links among workers, individual and group autonomy as well as task variety appeared to be the strongest influences on the workers' intention to stay.

The next chapter will integrate the key quantitative and qualitative findings. This will provide a comprehensive view of the data gathered and allow for discussion of its overall significance.



Photo 1: Chicago, US, 2010



Photo 2: Liverpool, UK 2009



Photo 3: Chicago, US, 2010



Photo 4: Leeds, UK, 2009



Photo 5: Liverpool, UK, 2009



Photo 6: Chicago, US, 2010

Chapter 8 - Integrated Discussion of Findings

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8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand potential influences on workers' intention to stay in a dirty job. Chapter 6 presented the findings of the quantitative model which depicted the key variables studied in the research survey. Chapter 7 described the qualitative results collected during site visit observation.

This chapter incorporates the results obtained from the two approaches of data collection and discusses the primary themes that emerged. Section 8.2 begins the chapter with an overview of the study which highlights the key aims of the research. Section 8.3 delves into the factors and experiences that affect the dirty worker's intention to stay. This section looks at each of the model variables individually to highlight the most substantial findings and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. Section 8.4 will discuss the statistical country location differences that were displayed during the ANOVA analysis. Lastly, section 8.5 provides a summary of the discussion.

8.2 Overview of the study

As the title suggests, the overarching research question for this study asks what factors play a role in a worker's intention to stay in a dirty job. This research seeks to reveal how characteristics of the work, employee satisfaction constructs and elements of employee embeddedness affect dirty worker retention. The study utilized one large multinational organization that performs services that many would classify as dirty work. Despite the disgusting and hazardous work, the many of the workers at the company have remained in their positions a

surprising long period. Over half of the workers have been with the company from 1-5 years and 15 percent have been with the company over 5 years. The researcher considered the best methods to study and explain the employees' intention to stay in their job. In contrast to the large array of preceding qualitative-based dirty work studies the current study included a comprehensive survey as well as a series of semi-structured interviews combined with participant observation. The qualitative data not only suggested topics for the questionnaire, but it also complemented the quantitative data by adding depth and personal perspective to the data.

8.3 Factors and experiences associated with dirty worker intent to stay

This section integrates the quantitative and qualitative results. The discussion is divided into 13 subsections, drawing on the prominent issues and findings related to the following subject areas: job variety, individual autonomy, group autonomy, satisfaction with work, person-job fit, perceived stigma, pay satisfaction, promotion satisfaction, supervision satisfaction, distributive justice, embeddedness fit, embeddedness sacrifice and perceived job alternatives.

In Bryman's 2007 study regarding barriers to integrating qualitative and quantitative data, he reviewed the challenges to writing up the two spheres of data in mixed methodology studies. He surmised that, "In genuinely integrated studies, the quantitative and qualitative findings will be mutually informative. They will talk to each other, much like a conversation or debate, and the idea is

then to construct a negotiated account of what they mean together” (Bryman, 2007: 21).

In the current study, in several areas, the quantitative and qualitative findings are not in unison. On that issue, Bryman discussed how there can be inherent “difficulty with marrying an objectivist account with a constructivist one based on people's discursive accounts” (Bryman, 2007:16). That fact alone explains some divergence in the results. The similarities and differences will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

8.3.1 *Job variety*

Hypothesis one predicted that job variety will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. The survey results suggested the workers believed their job contained a large amount of variety ($\bar{X} = 3.85$). Correlation analysis confirmed that with this sample of workers there was an association between job variety and intention to stay. The variable also was included in the second step of the hierarchical regression, which was the phase of the regression that contributed most to the explained variance.

Qualitatively, job variety was mentioned by a large portion of the workers during interviews and was evident from worksite observation. For example, Employee O commented, “I like the fact that every day it's usually a different job site which gives it some variety”. An employee from Hull talked about enjoying the diversity of his daily work duties: “I enjoy different tasks in life and I'm not afraid to put my mind and hands into different jobs”. He also mentioned how

much he enjoyed working in the outside garden spaces on the cleaning and clearing projects.

Although the daily assignments for the installers in the study have the same general components (i.e. cleaning refuse, scrubbing bathrooms and installing steel door plates), there is variation in the locations and specific requirements for each job. From an observer's perspective on site, it was evident that the workers moved around the properties performing different tasks. The work sites varied, requiring different, unique properties requiring various types of attention (e.g. the properties might be single family houses, or multi-unit homes or high- and low-rise apartment buildings.)

At each job site, the researcher watched workers move from task to task: securing the property with steel door and window covers, clearing previous tenant and squatter possessions, washing graffiti from walls, cleaning carpet stains, and scrubbing sinks and toilets. Certain sites also required attention in the garden space with cleaning and clearing of debris and landscape waste. The outside work added a further dimension of variety to their daily activities. Even without verbal confirmation from the workers, the researcher could see that each job brought with it a multitude of different chores that had to be handled to bring the project to completion.

These results are consistent with the work of Mueller et al., (1994) which found that decreased repetition in one's work corresponds favorably with intention to

stay. The type of variety contained in this dirty job follows the concept of task variety discussed in several dirty work articles (e.g. Perry, 1998; Sanders, 2010).

8.3.2 Individual and group autonomy

Hypothesis two and Hypothesis three theorised that perceptions of individual (H2) and group (H3) autonomy will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. Both hypotheses were validated through correlation analysis significant at .01. Within the hierarchical regression, only group autonomy was an individually significant predictor. However, both variables were included in the second step of the regression (job characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work), which was the strongest contributor to explained variance.

Qualitatively, the interviewed workers projected a belief they had at least some control over their work. Many expressed the view that they did not have managers carefully scrutinizing their actions on work sites. This sentiment was also supported from the perspective of the upper level managers. They too, believed that the structure of the work and the company's management style educated a loose supervision environment at jobsites.

The different results achieved between individual and group autonomy could be explained by the team work approach utilized by the company. Under this approach, each team (typically four people) is assigned a team leader, who is in charge and provides supervision on the job. Therefore, the workers could logically report less individual autonomy because they do have a team leader overseeing their work. However, each team has significant autonomy to choose

task approaches and methods for handling the accomplishment of the job on site. Also, the team leader holds a classification in the organization that is closer to that of an operations worker than a member of management. Team leaders typically have only slightly longer tenure on the job and therefore, hold a status similar to that of the basic installers on the team.

During the site visits, several workers explained that the teams have the freedom to determine who will cover the respective duties on work sites. The depot manager assigns a team to a site but the team determines how the work will be allocated on each job. Some teams assign tasks based on workers' preferences; other teams assign tasks on a rotating basis. The workers expressed pleasure having this amount of control over their daily duties.

These findings provide support for the team task autonomy framework created by Breugh (1985). As outlined in Chapter 4, the workers do not control their location assignment and workers must follow standard company procedures for installing window and door covers or cleaning and clearing a property. However, once the team leaves the depot, they have significant control over the organization of completing the assignment for the day. Teams are allowed to decide when and where to take their hour lunch breaks. Most importantly, the workers are allowed to distribute the work among the team members (Breugh, 1985).

The type of autonomy seen in the research organization appears similar to the circumstances described in Stacey's (2005) dirty worker study of home health

caregivers. In the Stacey research, home health care workers were not directly supervised at the home sites and were, therefore, able to set their sequence and pace of tasks throughout the day. Stacey proposed that this control over their labour was a significant factor in attaining dignity in the workplace, which enhanced their overall job satisfaction (Stacey, 2005: 845).

When the potential for stigmatization exists, control over one's schedule (individually or as a team) can be a valuable tool to help employees maintain dignity and honor (See Hughes, 1962; Hobson, 1991). This was evident both quantitatively and qualitatively in the current study. The survey results showed a strong relationship between both individual and group autonomy and intention to stay; worker interviews also supported this finding. The workers' command over their schedule and work team's exclusive control over expensive company issued equipment (e.g. van, Blackberry phones and laptop computers) appeared to positively influence the workers' feelings toward their job.

8.3.3 Satisfaction with work

Hypothesis four predicts satisfaction with work will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. Actual work duties and the manner in which the work is carried out can factor into overall job satisfaction (Price & Mueller, 1986).

This prediction was substantiated through quantitative and qualitative data. The survey results indicated the workers liked performing their required tasks. The mean score reported for the satisfaction with the work variable was 3.85 / 5.

Specifically, 81% of the workers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “I like doing the things I do at work”.

Correlation analysis confirmed a strong link between satisfaction with this dirty work and the employees’ intention to stay ($r = .59$). Similarly, hierarchical regression analysis showed a strong significance both as part of the most significant step (work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work) and as an individual predictor ($\beta=.24$, $p<.01$).

From a qualitative perspective, the workers expressed favorable views of their daily work duties. Some enjoyed the intensity of the work despite the necessity for heavy lifting and demanding workload. For example, a French worker from Vitrolles perceived the physical demands as an opportunity to improve his physical health [*“C’est un travail physique qui m’en apporte tous les jours”*].

This construct also highlights worker comfort and satisfaction with the dirty aspects of their daily job. Workers indicated some of the tasks were distasteful, but overall they were not deterred by the dirty and disgusting responsibilities. Those interviewed seemed to find their work requirements to be manageable and gratifying. A 41 year-old worker from Hull in the United Kingdom commented, “Although one day can be different from the next and it can be very demanding, I do enjoy my work and feel appreciated by the company most times”.

8.3.4 Person-job fit

The fifth hypothesis (H_5) predicts that person–job fit will be positively associated with a dirty worker’s intention to stay. This proposition was supported

throughout the quantitative and qualitative data. Within the survey results, worker responses resulted in the highest mean scores of any of the independent variables (4.11 / 5). Additionally, correlation analysis confirmed an association between person-job fit and intention to stay. The hierarchical regression analysis showed a strong significance both as part of the most significant step (work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work) and as an individual predictor ($\beta=.14$, $p<.05$).

These results support the findings of Saks and Ashforth (1997) and Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006). Both studies indicated a positive relationship between person-job fit and intention to stay. The findings also show support for the two-component description by Edwards (1991). In addition to the statistical support, workers' comments indicated they believe their skills and abilities were a good match for the requirements of the work, and that their needs, desires, or preferences were being met by this dirty job (Edwards, 1991; Kristof-Brown, 2005: 284-5).

Several workers talked about their capacity to endure disgusting and hazardous situations the average person would be unable to handle. Similarly, person-job fit also manifested in the discussions relating to the physical and outdoor work that are heavily incorporated into the installer work day. Employee H from the Leeds site visit mentioned, "I enjoy the outside work best." When asked about sometimes unpleasant outside weather conditions, he was adamant that he is not bothered by the outside elements and that "it would be torture to have to sit in an office all day". The job allows employees to be outside for part of their work

day, allowing them to move around and get physical exercise, rather than being confined to an office space.

Many workers talked positively about the physical requirements necessary to complete the work. The installers / fitters discussed the heavy weight of the settle doors and windows and said that a person needed to be quite strong and fit to handle the work. Employee P of Leeds asserted, “I know I can handle this job when a lot of people would be too weak or lazy to come in here and do the hard work”. Similarly, Employee G, spoke about the demands of his job; “Placing the steel doors is very heavy, hard work. I am very tired at the end of each day. An older or out-of-shape man would probably have difficulty doing this job”.

The cleaning workers said bending and squatting was a sizable aspect of their daily tasks, and that they also were required to haul heavy refuse and furniture out of vacated properties. Their ability to handle these tasks made them a good fit physically for the job. As a 27 year-old employee from Vitrolles, France, wrote in his survey comments, “*Ce travail, demande une condition physique. J'ai aucun doute sur ma condition. . .*” [translates as “This job requires a great physical condition. I have no doubt that I have the necessary condition”.]

Similarly, a 30 year-old worker from France said the physical demands are a positive part of the work, in that they provide the opportunity for him to stay in good physical health. “*C'est un travail physique qui m'en apporte tous les jours*” [translates as “It is a physical demanding job which keeps me in shape

everyday”.] This aspect of the job aligns with the needs and desires of this particular worker to stay in shape (Edwards, 1991).

In addition to being a good fit physically, workers on site also conveyed the impression they felt they possessed the necessary knowledge and experience for the job. As Employee M from Chicago stated, “I know this work and I’m good at it”. The work team the researcher interviewed at a public housing flat in Leeds talked about how as a team they are able to get through the job sites quickly and efficiently because each member of the team prefers and is skilled at cleaning certain types of rooms. For example, Employee B from Liverpool boasted that he was quite good at cleaning bathrooms and felt he could handle that particular room quickly and efficiently. This work team recognized individual preferences and talents, and distributed the work accordingly.

8.3.5 Perceived stigma

Hypothesis six (H_6) theorises that perceived job stigma will be negatively associated with intention to stay. The data collected supports this hypothesis. The worker survey responses resulted in a lower end mean score ($\bar{X} = 2.91$) indicating that workers do not generally feel a stigma from this work. Correlation analysis demonstrated a strong negative association between stigma and intent to stay ($p < .01$). Within the hierarchical regression, stigma did not display strong individual significance. However, perceived stigma was included in the grouping (work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work) that contributed the most to the explained variance of any of the four steps (35%).

However, if the employees interviewed feel embarrassed or stigmatized by their job working to secure and clean vacant properties, they hid those feelings well. When asked about their work environment, most workers did not indicate they found their work embarrassing or shameful.

There was discussion about situations and reactions from outsiders that could have resulted in a feeling of stigma. For example, Employee BB in Chicago said workers have had bricks thrown down at them as they walked into high-rise public housing buildings. This reflected a lack of respect or appreciation among some people for what the workers do in the community.

Many of the employees said they are pleased by their ability to hold a respectable job. Any negative judgments from the outside world appear to be dismissed and met with self-assured amusement. For example, a worker out of the Bradford UK depot explained; “I’ve had some people shouting rubbish at me when I’m carrying my cleaning supplies because they know I’m in the place cleaning up someone else’s mess. Still, I got a job and they’re just walking around causing trouble. How can they make me feel bad”? One Parisian employee’s only comment on the end of his survey was, “*Je suis fier me travailler pour [company name]*” [which translates as “I am proud to work for [company name]”].

According to Ashforth and Kreiner’s framework (based on Hughes, 1951), the worker responses reveal that this dirty job is both physically and socially tainted (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). The work has obvious connections to physical dirt and takes place in a hazardous location so these features indicate physical taint

(Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).⁹ Additionally, because the work takes place in project housing areas, the workers often come in contact with drug dealers and gang members. This association with stigmatized individuals, in addition to cleaning up the dirt of others when clearing properties can be perceived as a servile and therefore, could fall under the social taint classification (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; *see also* Hughes, 1951).

As predicted the research findings show an association between perceived stigma and intent to stay. An interesting point here is that some individuals feel stigma (29%), while others are proud to work in this dirty job. Obviously, individual backgrounds and mentalities will play a role. However, the findings could be related to the stigma management techniques described by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999).

8.3.5.1 Stigma management

According to Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Kreiner et al., (2006), if a worker intends to stay in a job, he will seek ways to feel good in that job. Ashforth and Kreiner suggest two overarching methods for dealing with taint. They are through the use of occupational ideologies and social weighting (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 150, 424). Several dirty work studies have discussed detachment from dirt which is another manner of dealing with taint (Thompson, 1991)

⁹ Ninety-one percent (91%) of the workers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I often work on job sites that are not clean”. Further, seventy- eight percent (78%) of the workers strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “Many people would not want to work in the areas of the city where much of my job takes place”.

(Tracy & Scott, 2006). Occupational ideologies will be discussed first; followed by social weighting and detachment will conclude this section.

8.3.5.1.1 Occupational ideologies

Occupational ideologies provide a means for interpreting and understanding what the occupation does and why it matters (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421). Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) proposed three types of ideologies: reframing, recalibrating and refocusing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Of these, reframing and refocusing were found to be in use by the workers in the current study. These techniques may justify the occupation and render it more appealing to the workers and outsiders.

8.3.5.1.1.1 Reframing

The process of reframing was reflected most prominently in the workers interviews. Reframing involves transforming the significance attached to a stigmatized occupation (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999:421). Researchers have observed two forms of reframing: infusing and neutralizing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421). The workers in the current study appear to employ the infusing technique. Infusing is the process of implanting positive value into the stigma. Most commonly, the worker looks to the relevancy of the work's mission and attaches honorable traits. By viewing themselves as having an admirable purpose, the workers are adding value to society and can take pride in their occupation (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 422).

This technique was evident during worker interviews. The workers downplayed the dirty elements of their job and instead focused on the good they were doing for neighborhoods. As Employee Z mentioned, the workers, “seem proud to work for an organization that is cleaning up the nasty neighborhoods”.

Several workers described a feeling of pride for what they accomplished every day. Although the job involves cleaning out the filth others leave behind as well as being in close proximity to squatters and drug dealers, the end results are gratifying to many of the workers interviewed. When the job is complete the workers leave behind a clean, secure building, which is an improvement for the community both in terms of esthetics and public safety.

This research fits with other dirty work literature that has shown the reframing technique. Perry (1998) found that garbage workers consider themselves to be helping to keep their communities clean and sanitary for inhabitants (Perry, 1998). Even pawn brokers, who some consider to carry a moral stigma, reframe by infusing the positive service they give to individuals in need. Hartnett (1981) found that pawn brokers see themselves as helping people in a financial crisis who need money quickly (Hartnett, 1981:154).

8.3.5.1.1.2 Refocusing

The worker interviews also revealed their use of the refocusing technique to minimize feelings of stigma. Refocusing involves shifting the attention from the tainted aspects of the occupation to the non-tainted aspects (Ashforth et al., 2007:

150). They negate and devalue negative attributions while they also create and revalue positive ideologies (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 421).

Some workers indicated they enjoy working outdoors and being physically active so the job provided related value for them. In contrast to their friends who might have jobs with greater occupational prestige, these workers feel fortunate they are not required to work indoors or sit at a desk all day. This fits with Ashforth and Kreiner's refocusing ideology.

8.3.5.1.2 *Social weighting*

In addition to the occupational ideologies, Ashforth and Kreiner also introduced the stigma management technique of social weighting, which is comprised of three types: condemning the condemners, supporting supporters and selective social comparing (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1991: 424; *see also* Sykes & Matza, 1957). To condemn the condemners is accomplished by diminishing the knowledge, character or abilities of those who might criticize the dirty work profession (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 424). This particular type of social weighting emerged in the course of the interviews. As a Bradford, United Kingdom worker expressed, "I've had some people shouting rubbish at me when I'm carrying my cleaning supplies because they know I'm in the place cleaning up someone else's mess. Still, I got a job and they're just walking around causing trouble. How can they make me feel bad"? This is a prime example of condemning anyone who would look down on them for doing the subservient job of cleaning up the mess of others.

This social weighting mentality also came across in comments relating to the physicality of the job. Many of the workers mentioned they needed physical strength and endurance to carry the steel doors and windows. Employee G from the UK discussed this point, “Placing the steel doors is very heavy, hard work. I am very tired at the end of each day. An older or out-of-shape man would probably have difficulty doing this job”. This comment anticipates potential criticism from people who are not in good physical condition and refutes it by underscoring the positive, required attribute of physical strength to perform the job tasks. In this way, the worker condemns any potential condemners.

8.3.5.1.3 Psychological detachment from the dirt

Several researchers have recognized that many dirty workers cope with taint by distancing themselves from the recipients of their unseemly services. This taint management strategy creates a wall between the worker and the aspects of the job that strongly contribute to a feeling of taint (Thompson, 1991; Tracy & Scott, 2006: 10). This type of distance was reflected during worker interviews. Either the workers were completely blasé about the people who had lived in the project house they were cleaning or they showed bemused disgust for them. As an example of the latter, Employee D, while working at a Liverpool project house commented, “Amazing how people can live like animals isn’t it”? By comparing the former residents to animals who had left behind piles of garbage, the workers could feel they had elevated their own status, which lessened any stigma attached to the job.

8.3.6 Satisfaction with pay, promotion, and supervision

The seventh hypothesis (H₇) encompasses three constructs related to worker satisfaction. The hypothesis predicts that satisfaction with pay, promotion and supervision will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. Quantitatively, there was some support for the hypothesis with pay satisfaction demonstrating the strongest support among the three variables. Worker responses resulted in a low mean score for pay satisfaction at ($\bar{X} = 2.78$). Supervision satisfaction achieved a relatively high mean score of ($\bar{X} = 3.99$) and the mean score for promotion satisfaction was not high or low at ($\bar{X} = 3.30$).

Correlation analysis indicated that all three of the variables were significantly associated with intention to stay. However, in the multiple regression analysis, only pay satisfaction demonstrated significance ($p < .05$) and the job satisfaction step in the regression that included all three of these variables did not appreciably contribute to the explained variance.

8.3.6.1 Pay satisfaction

From a qualitative perspective, most of the workers interviewed and survey comments indicated workers would like higher pay. Some workers connected the pay issue with unmet expectations. A substantial number of employees expressed dissatisfaction with what they said was the company's failure to follow through on promised pay raises. A worker in Los Angeles commented on the survey, "I was told that after 90 days I would get a raise. It has been 6 months and still no raise. My paperwork has not even been put in". This theme appeared frequently both in written survey comments and in worker interviews.

However, the quantitative association shown between pay satisfaction and intention to stay was not obviously reflected in the qualitative data. While the workers expressed a desire for higher pay, no workers indicated they would leave the job for one providing better pay.

Although pay satisfaction has been shown to link to turnover intentions, research also suggests the relationship between pay satisfaction and job turnover relationship may be weaker with some occupations where intrinsic job satisfaction, versus pay, may be of equal, if not greater importance (Singh & Loncar, 2010: 481; Ashforth & Kriener, 1999). This might seem somewhat paradoxical in the context of dirty work which for many would be devoid of intrinsic benefits. However, the data seems to suggest in the current study that the workers are satisfied with the dirty work itself.

This theme appears in a fair number of dirty work studies. Saunders stated in his 2010 ethnographic study of veterinary technicians: Autonomy, diversity of tasks, a supportive occupational culture, and the opportunity to acquire specialized skills compensated for the dirtiness and low pay of the veterinary technician's job (Saunders, 2010:262). Added to this were the rewarding structural features of the work and the ability to openly and routinely socialize with coworkers (Saunders, 2010: 264; *see also* Ghidina, 1992).

With this in mind, both the quantitative and qualitative data in the current study reflected high levels of satisfaction with work. As reported above, the mean score for the satisfaction with the work variable was 3.85 / 5 and a large portion

of workers (81%) agreed with the statement: “I like doing the things I do at work”. The qualitative interviews echoed that sentiment.

It is possible that while the workers are not completely satisfied with their pay levels, the intrinsic satisfaction that they receive from this unique work weakens the pay satisfaction-turnover relationship. The data reflects that workers are satisfied with many facets of their job. Similar to the earlier dirty work studies mentioned above, these areas of satisfaction might explain the low company turnover despite the reported pay dissatisfaction.

8.3.6.2 Promotion satisfaction

The workers projected an optimistic attitude regarding their promotional prospects at the company in their interview comments as well as the open ended survey responses. A worker from Leeds, who has been with the company over nine years, commented on his survey, “I have progressed through the ranks from being in yard, to fitter, to a team leader and now supervisor, and I’m looking forward to the next chance to step up again and hopefully in years to come become a director.” A worker the Hull, United Kingdom, who had been with the company for seven years, also demonstrated his enthusiasm to advance in the company; “Promotion is always something I’ll strive for at [the company] and I hope my keenness and enthusiasm is recognized”.

8.3.6.3 Supervision satisfaction

The workers generally spoke positively about their immediate supervisors. Additionally, while at the depots and worksites, supervisors and their

subordinates appeared to have a good rapport and effective work relationships. During the site visit to the project housing in Liverpool, the depot manager was also on site as the researcher's guide. When the depot manager left the room, the workers were eager to speak highly of him. They said they were fortunate to have such a caring direct supervisor. That depot manager's name appeared favorably in written comments as well.

However, not all the workers were positive about their direct supervisors. For example, a 28 year-old worker from Merseyside, United Kingdom wrote, "Nothing seems to be done to make things better or easier, for myself and others, there is no professionalism either from my supervisor or manager!" In general though, the workers were positive about their immediate supervisors at the depot level. Most negative comments were directed toward the upper management at the corporate headquarters level.

8.3.7 Distributive justice

Hypothesis eight (H₈) predicts that perceptions of distributive justice will be positively associated with a dirty worker's intention to stay. The quantitative data firmly supports this prediction. Correlation analysis demonstrates a significant association between perceptions of distributive justice and intention to stay. Additionally, hierarchical regression indicated distributive justice was significant as an individual predictor ($p < .10$).

As discussed in the supervision satisfaction section above, the majority of the negative comments about company management and procedures were aimed at

upper management. Some workers expressed that upper management did not ensure fairness in the organization relating to incentives and had broken promises relating to bonuses and pay rises. In one particularly scathing survey comment, a worker from Manchester, who has been with the company for 3 years, stated the investors get all the money and do not appear to care about the workers.

However, it is important to note that from a more localized perspective, the workers said that their depot managers and direct supervisors treated workers with fairness. Work assignments and pay issues handled at the depot level did not appear to be problematic according to the employees interviewed.

8.3.8 Embeddedness (fit, sacrifices, and links to the community)

Hypotheses nine and ten predict that dirty workers are more likely to stay if they are embedded in their workplace. This can be the result of fit with coworkers and organization (H_9) and as well as the feared sacrifices they will endure if they were to leave their job (H_{10}). Hypothesis 11 predicts that dirty workers who are embedded in their workplace due to links to the community will have a greater intention to stay. The links used for the study were: marital status, dependent children and home ownership. None of these variables showed statistical significance.

Quantitatively, hypothesis nine and hypothesis ten were supported by the correlation analysis results. In fact, embeddedness based on sacrifices had one of the highest correlation coefficients of any of the variables ($r = .612$, $p < .01$). Interestingly, the embeddedness step in the hierarchical regression failed to

significantly contribute to the explained variance. Additionally, none of the embeddedness predictors (fit, sacrifice, marital status, dependent children and home ownership) were individually significant.

While the concept of embeddedness has been supported by numerous studies (Lee et al. 2004; Mitchell et al., 2001), some research suggests that certain moderators can affect the degree to which embeddedness (on and off-the-job) will affect employee intention to stay and actual voluntary turnover (Jiang et al., 2012). This could explain the lack of significance shown in the current study.

In Jiang et al.'s research (2012), they found that type of organization (i.e. private or public), gender of the employees and national cultural differences can affect embeddedness levels. With organizational type, job embeddedness may have weaker effects on retaining employees in private firms. This can be due to a stronger turnover culture in private industry than in the public sector. Further, public employees are thought to value intrinsic factors such as interesting job content and the desire to serve public interests more than extrinsic factors (e.g. pay and promotion) (Jiang et al, 2012:1079, 1081).

Jiang et al.'s study also found that women are more likely to be affected by on-the-job embeddedness factors. They theorised that because women tend to display higher levels for communal attributes such as having more social and affiliative interests and concern for others, they would be more apt than men to value organizations. This, in turn, leads to greater feelings of sacrifice to leave a job (Jiang et al., 2012: 1079, 1081). Lastly, the Jiang et al. research found that

collectivistic cultures were more embedded by community aspects (off-the-job) than individualistic cultures (Jiang et al., 2012: 1081).

The current research consists of a private company located in three individualistic Western countries. (Although, it should be acknowledged that some workers have ethnic backgrounds outside of the research countries.) Further, the studied workers were almost exclusively male. These factors could account for the weak statistical showing of job embeddedness in the study.

Qualitatively, the worker interviews and comments supported the impression that many of the workers are embedded in the organization for various reasons. Holtom et al., (2006), looked at fit between the workers' skills and the job requirements. Additionally, one might expect ties to the organization through coworker relationships and overall job satisfaction. Thirdly, family links within community facilitate embeddedness.

During the site visits, team camaraderie and personal friendships were clearly evident. There was a great deal of friendly conversation and light-hearted banter between workers. Some openly expressed their appreciation for their coworkers. The depot manager in Chicago mentioned how much he felt the depot was a family atmosphere, citing the example that "if one of the guy's cars breaks down, one of his buddies will go pick him up". This is certainly indicative of workplace ties that would be lost if a worker were to leave the company.

The interviews failed to produce significant information regarding the workers' families in terms of children and spouse connections in the community. A few

of those interviewed said they had children. Employees M and N, who have worked together for over 10 years, talked about how their families socialize with each other after work.

As a result of their long tenure with the company, Employee M and Employee N had many vivid stories to tell about events on jobsites (e.g. how they jumped flat to the floor whenever they heard gunfire and then found fresh bullet holes in the screens they were fitting). Despite those types of incidents, the two said working together was an enjoyable aspect of the job, and they expressed no intentions of leaving.

Despite the lack of strong quantitative support for the embeddedness hypotheses, conversations with the workers supported many of the embeddedness concepts detailed by the work of Holtom et al., (2006). The current study also supported the findings of Burt (2001), Maertz and Campion (1998) and McPherson et al. (1992) which examined the effect of positive social work relationships and a social network on an employee's decision to remain in a job. These positive connections can influence an employee to stay even if they dislike other aspects of the work (Maertz & Campion, 1998).

8.3.9 Perceived alternative job opportunities

The only control variable that showed strong statistical significance was perceived alternative job availability. The job alternative variable displayed a strong negative correlation with intention to stay. Within the hierarchical

regression, this predictor has strong statistical significance individually ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .01$).

Comments related to this variable were not frequently mentioned in interviews or on the survey comments. Two workers intimated that if a much better job opportunity were offered to them, they would be interested in pursuing it. However, those comments were coupled with remarks that indicated the workers did not deem that to be a realistic possibility. Moreover, workers expressed interest in opportunities to excel within the current company.

8.4 Country variations

The study also explored the attitudinal differences of the dirty workers based on their country work location in the United Kingdom, France or the United States. In general, the majority of the variables did not show any statistically significant mean differences among the three country locations. In particular, the workers did not significantly differ in their attitudes relating to intention to stay.

Although the employees work within a carefully created template that has proven successful for the company, there still must be recognition that different employment experiences exist due to institutional dissimilarities. There were seven variables that indicated significant mean differences between country locations including: age, tenure, group autonomy, work satisfaction, perceived stigma, promotion satisfaction and supervision satisfaction.

Overall, the workers in the United Kingdom reported the least favorable opinions regarding their job, while the workers in France appear to possess the most positive views of their jobs when the three country locations are compared. The United Kingdom respondents reported the least group autonomy and the least satisfaction with work duties, promotion and supervision when compared with the United States and France. Additionally, workers in the United Kingdom registered the strongest perception of stigma with their job.

French worker responses indicated the greatest level of satisfaction with work duties, promotion opportunities and supervision when compared with the other country locations. They also reported the lowest levels of perceived stigma with their job. The workers in the United States had the highest reported levels of group autonomy.

None of the aforementioned differences were drastically different and while the UK worker's reported *lower* scores in relation to job satisfaction, they were not *low* scores. These were slight variations that could be indicative of the employees' general feeling about the job. If the UK workers were more displeased with their work than the other locations, this could account for greater feelings of stigma. However, it is important to remember that the UK workers did not report a notably different intention to leave in relation the US or French workers. This type of statistical variation could be the result of institutionalized attitudes toward work that permeate the employee outlook broadly in a geographic area.

In general, French workers reported more positive feelings regarding their jobs. This could account for decreased perception of stigma. If someone likes many aspects of his job, this could lessen feelings of stigma that might attach to dirty work. The French governmental system is rooted in a socialist ideology that creates a feeling of security for their citizens. According to Hughes, dirty workers act on society's behalf, performing these undesirable, albeit necessary tasks (Hughes, 1951). Having a more community-oriented mentality could positively affect the French worker's overall satisfaction and decrease feelings of stigma.

Despite the differences reported above, the results indicate considerable conformity in the attitudes of the workers in all three countries. Some possible reasons for the relative similarity could stem from the strong template used by the parent company to establish each of the subsidiaries. The exact same business structure was used to set up the foreign subsidiaries.

Each country location's operations structure is quite similar and the administrative and sales processes are the same. The subsidiaries also have strong communication with the headquarters. This could create a high degree of standardization in the face of national institutional differences.

The other consideration relating to the like-mindedness of workers in the three locations could relate to the work itself and the type of individual who chooses this type of job. According to the overall results, person-job fit had a statistically significant relationship with intention to stay. If the parent company has

established an accurate system of gauging which applicants have shown a good fit with this type of dirty work and it was implemented consistently at all three locations, the workers hired would tend to exhibit a strong person-job fit.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has synthesized the key findings of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The study identified a number of important features in the work situations of this population of dirty workers. The survey results showed a connection between intention to stay and all but two independent variables (i.e. marital status and dependent children).

The qualitative results also supported many of the study hypotheses. More importantly, the qualitative worker interactions permitted the researcher to see and hear directly how the workers relate to their dirty conditions, the neighborhood hazards and to their coworkers and supervisor.

The chief research aim was to gain greater awareness of the worker experiences relating to their dirty job. The survey results demonstrated that the workers are influenced by many of the same factors as other worker population. However, the results also indicated that they do feel stigmatized by the physical dirtiness of the job or from their frequent interaction with individuals who carry a stigma themselves due to homelessness and criminal activities.

The following chapter outlines the main implications of the research, and considers the contributions of this study. In doing so, it also highlights the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future research.

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9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the key findings of the study. This chapter begins with an overview of the thesis summarizing each chapter. The next section 9.3 outlines the primary contributions of the research. The methodological issues and the limitations of the study are considered in section 9.4, which is followed by recommendations for future research. Section 9.5 summarizes the study.

9.2 Overview of the thesis

The main aim of the study was to discover the social and societal factors that contribute to dirty worker's intention to stay. The first chapter framed the key elements of the study, explaining the importance of understanding this unique subset of workers. The introduction covered the methodological approach of the study, and outlined the organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 provided a review of literature on dirty work. The discussion included the evolution of dirty work literature originating with the work of Everett Hughes in 1951. This section also discussed the framework generated by Ashforth and Kreiner in 1999. This chapter also served to illuminate past research on identity in the dirty work context as well as occupational taint and stigma management techniques. The review included a discussion relating to dangerous work choices.

Chapter 3 reviewed existing literature relating to employee turnover. The review identified the most prominent theories relating to employee turnover. The chapter examined turnover literature relating to job satisfaction and characteristics of a

job (e.g., pay, rewards, communication, autonomy, and social opportunities). The chapter also evaluated theories related to non-work factors that can link an employee to a job (i.e., Lee et al.'s unfolding model and job embeddedness theory (Mitchell et al., 2001). The chapter also evaluated employee turnover theories as they might apply in a dirty work context.

Chapter 4 provided a contextual perspective of the research company. This chapter explained the company structure and the type of work performed. It also delineated the geographic depot locations where data was collected (United Kingdom, France and the United States). This chapter also considered the managerial style applied at the country locations. Interviews of upper level management (CEOs and Operations Managers), indicated that a loose supervision approach is utilized at every subsidiary location. Literature which contemplates the merit of practical autonomy versus direct control over production workers was also reviewed.

Chapter 5 outlined the methodological approach of the study. The chapter explained the rationale for and advantages of using a mixed-method approach. The main benefits of combining both quantitative and qualitative data centered on the opportunities for the individual methods to complement each other and provide greater depth in understanding dirty worker attitudes and experiences. The chapter detailed the survey instrument content and provided Cronbach alpha reliability results. Details of the interview guide and work site observation were also explained.

Chapter 6 reported the quantitative results of the study, based on survey responses of 266 workers. It presented the sample characteristics and the descriptive statistics of the variables that were part of the research model. It also included the results of the ANOVA tests, which outline significant differences in responses based on country location. The chapter reported the various significant correlations between the variables included in the model. Subsequently, the chapter discussed the results of the hierarchical regression analysis, which was carried out in four steps: control variables, work characteristics / attitudes toward dirty work, job satisfaction, and job embeddedness.

Chapter 7 presented the qualitative results of the research, drawing on 53 semi-structured interviews and passive participant observation at work sites. The chapter describes the graphic and disgusting images and smells encountered during fieldwork observation. Most prominently, the chapter examined the study's key themes based on a combination of observations and analysis of worker comments in interviews, short discussions and survey commentary.

Finally, Chapter 8 discussed the key findings of the study. This chapter provided an integrated examination of the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. This was accomplished through the merging of statistically significant factors and the prominent themes that surfaced during fieldwork observation and worker comments.

9.3 Contribution of the thesis / literature review

The concept of dirty work encompasses a wide array of unusual and remarkable features. This subject matter has provided researchers with the opportunity to explore an assortment of different professions with varying experiences. The main contribution of the current study lies in the detection and analysis of some of the factors associated with this distinct population of workers' intention to remain in their jobs. The thesis adds new insights to the extant literature on dirty work by exploring the unique features of this type of job from workers' perspective.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection offers viewpoints that have not been the norm in typical studies of dirty work occupations, which commonly utilize ethnographic methods. The use of mixed-methods provides a better understanding of, and additional depth to, the examination of the phenomenon. The quantitative phase aided the understanding of the relationships between the study factors and intention to stay. The qualitative research simultaneously helped expand on the variety of worker experiences and the range of worker considerations and job demands encountered at a dirty and hazardous work site. Additionally, the multi-national scope of the research enhances the study's contribution to existing dirty work literature because of its capacity to gauge different worker experiences based on country location.

This study relied on two areas of academic literature: dirty work and employee turnover. Both areas of literature offered guidance and helped establish a foundation for study. This study depicts the daily life of a group of dirty workers

and examines factors that influence the workers' desire or need to stay in the job. Employee turnover research is abundant in comparison to the less studied dirty work subject. Therefore, it is probable that this study offers a greater research contribution to the field of dirty work than to employee turnover.

9.3.1 Dirty work literature

Studies done on the dirty work phenomenon fall into three categories in terms of primary emphasis. The three types of studies also loosely follow a temporal progression. The first group, which has the longest heritage, looks at the societal view of dirty work. The second grouping extends the societal view and focuses on the psychology of the worker, including social identity, organizational identity and means by which individuals handle work stigma. The third category of articles encompasses both the societal view and the individual perspective, and adds an employee management emphasis.

The workers' intention to stay in their dirty job stands as the single dependent variable and key area of interest. This study casts a wide net examining how perceptions of dirtiness, work characteristics, attitudinal constructs and job embeddedness play a role in dirty worker retention. This distinguishes it from most of the previous work. Furthermore, the study includes a cross-cultural perspective with data gathered from three countries. The remainder of this section will look at where the current project falls into this framework and discuss how the research model and the results obtained from the study contribute to the field of dirty work research.

9.3.1.1 Hughes' societal view

Previous studies viewed dirty work as a curious and interesting sociological phenomenon. In his foundational work, Hughes (1951) described dirty work as being physically disgusting, a symbol of social disgrace and counter to moral concepts (Hughes, 1951). Hughes also deliberated the philosophical and societal reasons dirty workers exist. He dissected the symbolism of dirt as a divider of the different layers of humanity and he questioned the role of a man's dignity in having to perform such work. Hughes brought to light the "moral division" that exists between classes and the significance of these purposely unseen and disregarded members of the workforce (Hughes, 1971: 306).

Although dignity and shame were discussed, Hughes' work focused less on the mentality and motivations of the dirty workers and more on the views society and the non-dirty workers held regarding dirty jobs. He surmised that spectators to dirty work take solace in the fact that these dirty tasks are being done by someone else. He further theorised that this helped create boundaries between those who watched and kept their hands clean and those who touched the dirt (Hughes, 1971).

Several other authors have delved into this idea of dirty work and class structure as well as the necessity of dirty workers in society. It is important to acknowledge the combinations in particular of two. In his ethnographic study of London building workers, Thiel (2007) addressed the idea of how the degree of dirt associated with the different trade jobs dictated the worker's level in the construction site social hierarchy. Thiel found that "the trades were embedded in

a status hierarchy with the dirty jobs of labouring and painting at the bottom-end and the relatively clean job of carpentry at the other” (Thiel, 2007:238). Reid’s (1991) book regarding workers in the sewers of Paris contemplated the problem of “degraded labor”. He referred to the sewer workers as having an “untouchable” status (Reid, 1991: 127).

Ultimately though, any research done that furthers the understanding of dirty jobs and dirty workers owes its heritage to Hughes and has the potential to contribute to Hughes’ foundation. Aside from the stigma construct, the quantitative portion of the current study does not closely follow the societal perspectives of Hughes. The qualitative segment of the study touches on some of the ideas put forth by Hughes. The results were obtained through interviews with the workers and by observer - participant observation. As an observer, the researcher had that same vantage of seeing the worker from a bystander position, which is a prominent feature of Hughes’ work.

Some of interviews garnered interesting insights into how the workers perceived their role in the community. As one French worker commented, “*Je suis fier de travailler pour* [company name]”, which translates that he is proud to work for the company. A general theme emerged that the workers believed they were cleaning and making a community problem less hazardous. Following Hughes’ logic, these workers considered themselves to have a valuable purpose in society; clearing away the trash and keeping out the bad elements.

Ironically, spending time on the dilapidated job sites in these dangerous areas prompted many of the workers interviewed to place themselves in a higher societal position than that of people after whom they were cleaning up. While some may feel the job lacks dignity and that it is servile to clean up after another, these workers were inspired by what they saw because they viewed themselves as “superior” in class to the derelict people who had been living in the properties. As Employee D, in Liverpool commented, “Amazing how people can live like animals isn’t it?”

In Leeds, another employee, F, took a superior position with his comment: “I’m just glad that I don’t live in a place like this. Seeing the drug dens or squatted units really makes me appreciate that I have a job and don’t have to live near these people”. These comments supply an interesting perspective on the social hierarchy views of Hughes (1951, 1958).

9.3.1.2 Ethnographic studies

Following Hughes and other sociologically framed works on the subject, there have been a variety of studies that have focused primarily on a single profession (e.g. morticians (Thompson, 1991), exotic lap dancers (Colosi, 2012), police (Dick, 2005), social workers (Mayer, J. and Rosenblatt, A. (1975), butchers (Meara, 1974), bike messengers (Kidder, 2006), tattoo artists (Adams, 2012), steelworkers (Haas, 1977), hotel maids (Powell and Watson, 2006), miners (Fitzpatrick, 1980), garbage haulers (Perry, 1998), and AIDS caregivers (Martinez, 2007). The current study contributes to this collection of studies on a single organization. It is an additional study in a varied collection of studies that

provide an exploration into the daily work lives and mentality of workers performing a dirty job.

A fundamental distinction with many of these studies is that the majority were done by researchers who worked alongside their research subjects. Jack Haas (1977) spent nine months placing the steel framework on a 21 story high rise building. He “lived” the research by “running the iron” as he referred to his everyday tasks (Haas, 1977: 151).

Rachaela Colosi worked as a dancer in a lap dancing club in Northern England to collect the data for her research (Colosi, 2012). This allowed her intimate access to other dancers and to experience the elements of the dirty job herself. Ethnographic research is well suited for dirty work research. While some field research was done for the current study, the extent of the contact was limited compared to many of the existing ethnographic studies.

These ethnographic studies, through close personal contact with the workers and even through research participation, have emphasized the psyche of the individual worker. They ask the question of how the worker handles the unusual and difficult work circumstances and provide findings and analysis explaining how and why the worker does the dirty job.

9.3.1.3 Ashforth and Kreiner - the psychology and coping of the dirty worker

In 1999, Ashforth and Kreiner published a seminal article on the perceptions of dirty workers. The authors asserted the common denominator among dirty jobs is not their specific attributes but the visceral repugnance of people to them (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 415). The primary themes were social identity theory, organizational identification and stigma management. Ashforth and Kreiner elaborated on the classification created by Hughes (1951).

Work is classified as dirty or tainted in one or more of three possible ways. The first category is physical taint, which designates work as either directly associated with actual dirty, filthy conditions or as performed under particularly dangerous circumstances. The second category is social taint, which includes work that necessitates regular contact with stigmatized individuals or is servile. The third classification is morally tainted work, which involves a job that is dubious in nature or requires deceptive, confrontational actions. This 1999 article, as well as several others by Kreiner et al. (2006) and Ashforth et al. (2007), have built the framework for contemporary dirty work research.

According to Kreiner et al. (2006), the level of stigma in dirty work can be categorized in terms of breadth and depth of the dirtiness. Pervasive stigma describes an occupation that is socially defined by its strongly stigmatized task or work environment (e.g. garbage handlers). The job has both high breadth and high depth of taint. Compartmentalized stigma is found in occupations where only some tasks are strongly stigmatized. Kreiner et al. (2006) cites the example of a reporter who only occasionally must report on a gruesome accident (Kreiner

et al., 2006: 622) Compartmentalized stigma is low in breadth but high in depth. Diluted stigma describes a job in which the stigma is predominant but mild (e.g. auto mechanics). The stigma is high in breadth and low in depth. Lastly, idiosyncratic stigma is the mildest form of stigma when tasks are neither routinely nor strongly stigmatized. The work has both low breadth and low depth of taint.

The current research connects with this line of study primarily in the area of stigma. According to Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), stigmatization occurs with dirty work because society projects the negative qualities associated with dirt onto them so that they are seen as dirty workers (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999: 416). The workers in this study were asked whether or not they believed other people were impressed by their job as a measure of their perception of stigma.

9.3.1.4 Employee Management

The majority of dirty work articles have focused on the sociology and psychology around dirty jobs, but very few have concentrated on the employee management elements connected to dirty work employees. There have been only a few studies that examine dirty workers as a meaningful population of workers who need to be properly managed to increase motivation, productivity and retention.

Few studies have discussed the practical features of managing dirty workers to achieve optimal levels of performance. For example, Lopina et al. (2012) examined whether differences in access to job information prior to hire, career

commitment, belief in the job value, negative affectivity (NA), and maladaptive coping style were related to turnover of animal shelter employees whose duties included euthanizing animals. Results supported all of the factors that Lopina et al.'s hypothesized would relate to employee turnover.

Previous ethnographic research (e.g. Stacey, 2005 and Hood, 1998) suggests that a management style which promotes practical autonomy adds to reported employee satisfaction in dirty jobs. The current study supports that position. These workers are not closely monitored on job sites and are given some discretion to figure out the best way to complete the job. Worker interviews confirmed that they do recognize that they are given this independence and many expressed that it adds value to their job.

Another management-related article is found in Ashforth et al.'s (2007) research, which discussed managerial tactics for countering occupational taint. The goal of the article was to offer insights on how to actively counter work stigma or at least render it less pronounced. Although this article is an extension of many of the same themes addressed in the earlier articles by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Kreiner et al. (2006), this study also considers the role management plays in minimizing stigma to promote higher productivity.

9.3.2 Employee turnover literature

Chapter 3 focuses on the prominent employee turnover literature. Various studies have considered different theories regarding why workers intend to stay. The literature review outlines the prominent research on job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, and job characteristics as it pertained to employee turnover decisions. The chapter also discusses the unfolding turnover model by Lee and Mitchell (1994) and the embeddedness theory established by Mitchell et al. (2001).

The current research dissected this literature base and determined which constructs were most appropriate for testing dirty worker intention to stay. The research model contained variables previously tested in relation to employee turnover: job variety, individual and group autonomy, satisfaction with work, person-job fit, satisfaction with pay, promotion and supervision, distributive justice, job embeddedness - fit, sacrifice, and links to community. As stated previously, there was some degree of support for each of the hypotheses - quantitatively and/or qualitatively.

9.3.2.1 Job embeddedness

Mitchell et al.'s (2001) theory of embeddedness is rooted in the idea that worker decisions to stay are influenced by an array of factors both at work and in their home life. This web of influences makes it difficult for an employee to leave her employment due to: 1) links to people and institutions in the workplace and community, 2) a perception that she is a good fit with her work environment and 3) the perceived material and psychological sacrifices that would be incurred if she were to leave the job. On the whole, Mitchell et al.'s study found that this web of embeddedness correlated negatively with employee's intention to leave and with actual turnover. The study also asserted that embeddedness is a more accurate predictor of voluntary turnover than job satisfaction, organizational commitment, perceived job alternatives and job search (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Given the population of workers in the current study and the strong workgroup culture that can be facilitated by dirty, stigmatized jobs (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999), the theory of job embeddedness was expected to fit well in the dirty work context. The researcher anticipated that job embeddedness would strongly factor into workers' intention to stay.

Although there was a correlation shown between job embeddedness (fit and sacrifice) and intention to stay, there was a surprising lack of statistical significance for the job embeddedness grouping in the hierarchical regression. Not only did that step of the regression fail to contribute to explained variance, but none of the variables were individually significant. Further, the embeddedness community links (marital status, dependent children and home ownership) were not significant at any point during the quantitative research.

9.4 Limitations and future research

The study's results must be interpreted in light of several limitations. The main limitations for this thesis were: 1) the use of self-report questionnaires and language comprehension issues 2) the small sample size for the France location and 3) generalizability.

9.4.1 Self-report questionnaires

The use of self-report questionnaires has long been seen as a limitation of quantitative research. Spector (1994) suggests these can lead to common method variance and contamination effects as employees respond to items with potential biases. These validity threats might include the influence of (a) social

desirability, where participants attempt to portray themselves in a positive manner, and (b) positive affectivity and negative affectivity, which are stable emotional dispositions that might systematically affect workers' world-views in a positive or negative way. Such biases can distort the authenticity of the research, especially when employees are asked to respond to sensitive items relating to their employment situation.

9.4.1.1 Questionnaire comprehension considerations

The survey was distributed to employees in three countries which encompassed a diverse group of workers. Because there were obvious French language speakers in the France locations, the survey instrument was translated and back-translated into French. Upon further contact with the research company it should be acknowledged that further translations could be done to accommodate Spanish speaking workers (particularly in the United States locations). Although good response rates were received, lack of comprehension or comfortability with the English language might have influenced some Spanish speakers to refrain from completing the survey.

9.4.2 French worker sample size

The unbalanced group sizes and relatively small sample size for the France location imposed limitations. The total sample size was 266, with 157 workers represented from the United Kingdom, 78 workers from the United States and 31 from France. A more robust test of the relationships of interest could have been achieved had the country location group sizes been more similar. This small

sample size suggests comparative results between France and the other two countries should be interpreted with caution.

9.4.3 Generalizability

The data for the study were collected within the context of a single organization. Therefore, the issue of generalizability is of particular concern. Although Hughes (1951) and Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) have generated a useful framework for dirty work (physically dirty, socially dirty and morally dirty) with even further classification available within those three primary designations. However, the concept of dirty work contains considerable ambiguity. This means that the results obtained from this group of workers in what some would term dirty work, could vary significantly from other dirty jobs. Consequently, the question of whether or not these results can be replicated in other organizations is an avenue for future research.

Given the collection of disgusting and dangerous jobs present in every community, the research approach used with this group of workers could be tested with other dirty work occupations. Specifically, these workers are primarily performing physically dirty work with some social taint. There is little or no moral taint associated with their work, except perhaps in the eyes of the community members who have a dislike for police presence and liken these workers to that authority. This same research could be utilized on other types of workers with different categories of taint. Additionally, all the research locations are located in Western-minded countries. Although different ethnic origins exist within the sample, a study that includes locations with significantly different

cultural dimensions could provide for more generalizable findings to a larger proportion of workers.

The strength of the research lies in the use of a mixed methodology which generated quantitative survey data along with qualitative interview and observation results. These strengths could be further enhanced in future studies with a longitudinal research design to determine the causality between the variables of interest in the study (*See MacKinnon, 2008: 193*). A follow-up study could be initiated with this particular sample of workers to examine whether employees continue to remain at this organization long-term.

9.5 Conclusion

The study identified a number of factors that were associated with workers intending to stay at their dirty job. All of the factors predicted to affect intention to stay were found to be at least partially supported. Certain elements exhibited very strong connections with worker intent to stay. With this population of workers, employee-job fit, task variety, group autonomy, the work itself (physical, outside work) and positive coworker relations all appear to be important aspects of employee contentment and intention to stay.

At the research organization, the workers spend their days in filthy surroundings, cleaning up previous tenants' abandoned possessions and garbage. This scenario has the potential to leave an employee embarrassed and feeling stigmatized. However, the results did not indicate the workers feel stigmatized by their job.

The research company has created an environment that encourages feelings of autonomy and perceived authority. The loose supervisory style also helps employees to feel trusted and empowered.

The team-based structure facilitates camaraderie and social interaction on work assignments. The workers made it clear during interviews that they relied on their teammates to pay attention and protect each other when working at a site in a high crime area. Given the strong organizational culture that can form in stressful and esthetically unpleasant work situations, this type of coworker bonding should be encouraged, as it could contribute to increased employee intention to stay.

In sum, the research company offers a form of employment that on its face would seem to have the potential for extremely high rates of employee turnover. Instead, many of the workers studied have remained with the company for over a decade cleaning out disgusting vacant properties. This study sought to provide insight into some of the reasons these dirty workers stay in their positions. The use of a combined quantitative and qualitative approach helped to provide a comprehensive picture of the job and organizational factors that contribute to worker turnover intentions. This study will hopefully advance the awareness of the unique characteristics of these difficult, but necessary type of jobs.

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